

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Inside Intermarriage: The Experience of Gentile People Married to Jewish spouses

By

Karen Beth Cogan



A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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in

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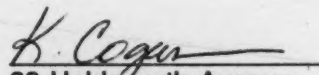
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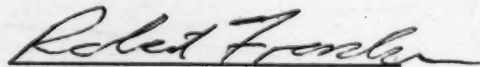
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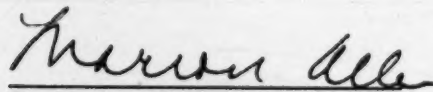

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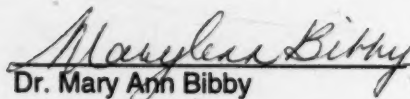
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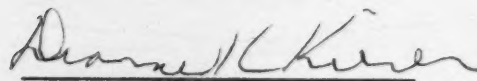
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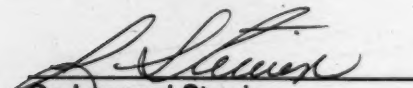
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ABSTRACT

Canadian intermarriage rates between Jewish and Gentile people have risen significantly over the past several decades. Most related research has been generated in the United States and focuses on Jewish concerns for continuity and survival. This dissertation focuses on the experiences of seven Gentile people married to Jewish spouses who were living in Edmonton, Canada. Three females and four males, ranging in age from 27 to 55 years old, with backgrounds in the Catholic, Anglican, United, and Mormon churches, were interviewed twice. Most individuals had been intermarried for a minimum of seven years. Four participants had been married only once, whereas three had been married previously. Two participants had children as a product of their current marriage and three individuals had children through previous marriages. The goal of the unstructured interviews was to elicit rich descriptions of intermarital experiences. A phenomenological methodology was employed to collect and analyze the data and to extract common themes generated by the narratives. Participants felt that they were more like their partners than different, and more importantly that they were compatible. Through the course of their marital lives they benefited from social support and also faced external challenges from rabbis, parents, friends, and communities. The ability to manage negative influences depended on a number of interconnected factors, including the internal and external resources of couples. Formal study, mentorship from Jewish families, and experience over time helped those who were initially unfamiliar with Jewish traditions to 'learn the ropes' of Jewish life. Juggling life cycle milestones, traditions, and choosing the religious identity of children required negotiation, flexibility, communication, and mutual respect.

Marital dynamics strongly impacted the navigation of religious and cultural differences. Over time, participants gradually felt more like insiders with respect to the Jewish community, however some believed that they would never fully internalize a strong sense of Jewish identity. Some felt more like outsiders with respect to their Gentile communities as a byproduct of intermarrying. Participants did not define their relationships by religious or cultural differences and overall felt that intermarrying had widened their horizons. Implications for counselling and research are discussed.

DEDICATION

To my beloved grandfather, Louie Katz, whose encouragement, inspiration, and loving kindness will never be forgotten.

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There are many people to whom I am grateful for helping make this dissertation possible. First, I would like to thank the seven participants who generously gave of their time and shared their stories with me. I am indebted to you for your valuable contribution and hope that your stories help others gain a deeper understanding of intermarriage.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the liberal, ethical, independent culture of today, religion is often dismissed. But the influence of traditional religious ideas quietly, often invisibly, permeates almost every area of our lives. (Kaye, 1980, p. 2)

Relevance of Jewish-Gentile Intermarriage

All marriages are in an important sense 'intermarriages'. When two people make a commitment of lifelong partnership, they bring together a myriad of backgrounds, experiences, and expectations that are bound to include differences. Marriage involves not only the union of two people, but also the joining of two systems of meaning (Duncan, 1992). Although all marriages require compromise and negotiation, unions between two people of diverse religious backgrounds can pose unique challenges (Aradi, 1988; McGoldrick & Preto, 1984). Faith structures, however strong or weak, provide "cultural-linguistic contexts for perceiving and responding to life experience" (Duncan, 1992, p. 107). Upon marrying, intermarried couples can face a "cultural transition" that requires negotiation in order for them to successfully move through key developmental family life cycle stages (Falicov, 1986).

The occurrence of marriage between Jews and non-Jews, considered a taboo in the early twentieth century, has increased dramatically since the 1960's. During the 1920's approximately 1 in 200 American Jews married Gentiles (Mayer, 1985), whereas at present approximately 52% of American Jewry are intermarrying (Kosmin et al., 1991). Although rates of Jewish intermarriage are lower in Canada, they have nonetheless substantially increased from approximately 3% in 1927 to 28% in 1987 (Larson & Munro, 1990).

The rise in Jewish-Gentile marriage in North America has occurred in the context of an increasingly secularized society with a growing acceptance of religious, ethnic, and cultural differences (Mayer, 1985; Larson & Munro, 1990). Given this sociocultural backdrop, it is not surprising to find that intermarriages between people of different religions and ethnicities is a growing phenomenon (Johnson, 1980; Spickard, 1989). A recent article featured on the cover of *Newsweek Magazine* (Adler, 1997) entitled "Whose Faith for The Kids? Mixed Marriages, Holidays and Hard Choices" is indicative of the increasing relevance of intermarital issues in mainstream society today.

North American Jewry is a minority group, making up only one quarter of one percent of the world's population. Because many intermarried couples do not choose to raise their children solely as Jews, intermarriage is seen as a threat to Jewish continuity (Phillips, 1997). Several key factors have resulted in this overall reaction to intermarriage by the Jewish community. Given its history as a persecuted minority group, survival has always been a paramount issue for the Jewish community, and with Jewish fertility rates currently at or below replacement levels, the aging community is concerned for its future (Brym, 1993; Weinfeld, 1981). In addition, many Jewish people fear that their cherished traditions, values, and beliefs passed on for generations will be lost as North American Jewry becomes increasingly secularized. A review of two contemporary publications addressing this issue was recently published in *The Globe and Mail* (Tulchinsky, 1997) entitled: "Is Jewish History Ending?: What 20 Centuries of Persecution Culminating in The Holocaust Could Not Do-- Obliteration of The Jewish People--Toleration and Acceptance May Accomplish" (p. D11). The extreme concern of much of the North American Jewish community is reflected in this rather sensationalized title.

Given this historical, psychosocial context, it is not surprising to find that most of the literature pertaining to Jewish-Gentile marriage has been conducted by Jewish people and geared toward Jewish concerns. Although Canadian Jewry is concerned about intermarriage, significantly less research on Jewish-Gentile marriage has been conducted in Canada than has been in the United States. This is likely due to the significantly smaller Canadian Jewish population (approximately 350,000) in comparison with American Jewry (approximately 5.5 million) (Goldstein, 1992; Torczyner & Brotman, 1995). Further, lower intermarriage rates in Canada may have lead Canadian Jewry until recently to believe that the issue was more pertinent in the United States than in Canada.

Nonetheless, intermarriage rates among Canadian Jewry are rising, particularly in Western Canada. Larson and Munro (1990) reported that 44% of Jewish Albertans intermarried in 1986. Furthermore, a national Canadian study conducted by the McGill Consortium for Ethnicity and Family Planning (Torczyner, Brotman, & Viragh, 1993) reported a trend of increasing Jewish-Gentile intermarital rates in cities, like Edmonton, with fewer Jewish people. They concluded by asking a number of questions: "What are the implications of increased intermarriage for the long-term continuity of Canadian Jewry? Are these irreversible? What programmatic responses might the Canadian Jewish community consider in relation to these families and to their children?" (p. 36). Given the great concern about intermarriage amongst much of the Jewish community, the Jewish-Gentile intermarried couple today finds themselves in the midst of a salient controversy.

Despite the fact that interfaith couples now represent a significant and growing population, recent and scholarly research on the psychological aspects of these relationships is minimal. Most research in the area has been primarily

sociological in nature, and as a consequence, relevant psychological theoretical frameworks pertaining to the study of intermarriage are sorely lacking.

The most glaring void in the Jewish-Gentile intermarriage literature, is the absence of research on Gentile people married to Jewish spouses. Although intermarriage has increased among Christian groups, overall they have not reacted to these rates with great alarm, largely due to their majority status. In other words, intermarriage is not viewed as an extreme threat to Christian survival as a whole (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991). Explanations such as these, however, do not shed light on the experiences of Gentile people who are intermarried to Jewish spouses.

The Research Question

Gentile people married to Jewish partners often find themselves in the midst of a Jewish community that sees intermarriage as a crisis. Understanding Gentiles' experiences would provide useful insights relevant to marriage and family theory and to counselling intermarried couples. How do Gentiles experience being intermarried to Jews? What are the challenges that they face? What are the personal gains and losses that they experience? How do their early learnings about religion and marriage influence their experiences of being intermarried? How does the level of commitment to their own religion impact on their experiences of being intermarried?

Following this line of thinking, my research addressed the question: "What is the experience of being married to a person who is Jewish from the perspective of a person who is Gentile?" Using a phenomenological qualitative methodology (Colaizzi, 1978), I sought to identify salient personal, interpersonal, and intergenerational factors that impact the experience of being intermarried from the perspective of Gentiles who are married to Jews and living in Edmonton, Alberta.

Contribution

This research contributes to understanding intermarriages from an insider's perspective. Because few studies have examined the Canadian experience of intermarriage, this study sheds light on the experiences of Gentiles married to Jews in a Canadian province with high intermarriage rates. The findings add to research in this area of marriage and family therapy and provide therapists and religious leaders with valuable insights in working with intermarried couples. Specifically, by uncovering and exploring relevant issues and challenges faced by intermarried people, strategies, questions, and areas of focus both for further research and for therapists are examined.

Terminology

The varying terminology describing marriage across groups renders exploration of the literature cumbersome and confusing. Intermarriage, interfaith marriage, mixed marriage, out-marriage, and exogamy (marrying outside one's own group), are but a few of the terms used in the literature to describe marriage between people who were born of different religions. *Intermarriage* is a general term referring to marriage across groups. Gordon's (1964b) broad definition of "intermarriage" includes:

those married persons whose religious, racial, or ethnic background is or was different from each other's, either prior to or after their marriage. Even if the marriage partners differ from each other in only one of these categories they may be said to be intermarried. (p. 1)

For the purpose of this research, the term intermarriage will be used most often when describing marriage between Gentile and Jewish people. The word intermarriage seems more appropriate than interfaith marriage, because the former implies individuals who are both strongly and loosely affiliated with their religious affiliations.

Although intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles involves issues of faith, it also necessarily involves issues of *ethnicity*. As defined by McGoldrick and Preto (1984), ethnicity refers to:

a sense of commonality transmitted over generations by the family and reinforced by the surrounding community. It is more than race, religion, or national and geographic origin. . . It involves conscious and unconscious processes that fulfill a deep psychological need for identity and historical continuity. (p. 347)

Jewish identity involves an inextricably interwoven blend of religious and ethnic components (Rosen & Weltman, 1996). In addition, Gentiles may be affiliated with any number of religions and ethnic backgrounds. Although members of a majority may not be actively aware of their ethnicity, they share a history and sense of culture that may remain latent until they are faced with differences (Spickard, 1989).

Specific terminology with respect to the term *Jew* is also in need of clarification. According to Jewish law, a Jew is a person who is born to a Jewish mother or a person who formally converts to Judaism. According to these guidelines, Orthodox and Conservative movements consider a child of a Gentile woman and Jewish man to be non-Jewish. A child in this situation would require formal conversion to be considered Jewish. In response to the large number of intermarriages, however, the Reform branch of Judaism (a progressive movement), in 1983, recognized children born of a Jewish man and Gentile women as Jewish, if the child is both raised as and identifies as a Jew (Telushkin, 1991). The issue of patrilineal descent has ignited a controversy among North American rabbinate, and the Orthodox and Conservative branches of Judaism still adhere to matrilineal descent.

The term *Gentile* will refer generally to individuals who were born of, or who were raised in a religion other than Judaism. All the participants in this study have Christian backgrounds and presently have varying degrees of

identification. When referring to a particular individual, I will specifically identify the religion of his or her birth. I will refer to participants more generally, however, as "Gentiles", rather than as "Christians", as several participants no longer considered themselves to be affiliated with their respective religions of birth and preferred the term Gentile.

The word *convert* refers to a person who was not born Jewish, but formally converted to Judaism. In Jewish tradition, people who convert are supposed to be considered fully Jewish and should not be referred to as "converts" to avoid challenging their Jewish identity. The literature, however, differentiates converted and non-converted Gentiles in order to distinguish between them for theoretical and research purposes. I will therefore use the term *convert* for the same reason. *Jews by Choice* can refer to Jews who have formally converted to Judaism and is also used to describe Gentiles who have not converted formally, but who nonetheless identify themselves as Jews.

A Glossary in Appendix G will explain religious and cultural terms identified throughout the dissertation with an asterisk. In most cases, I have chosen to explain terminology in the appendix, rather than in the body of the text, in an attempt to maintain a flow of ideas and stories.

Overview of Dissertation

In Chapter Two, *Review of The Literature*, a selected overview of theories and research pertaining to Jewish-Gentile intermarriage is presented. Historical and psychosocial issues pertaining to the topic are explored. Then, demographic research and theories explaining the reasons for intermarriage and describing the religious and cultural practices of intermarriers are presented. Literature exploring some of the benefits and potential challenges associated with intermarriage are examined. Finally, a selected review of

marriage and family literature is presented to contextualize Jewish-Gentile marriages as but one kind of marriage.

In Chapter Three, *Method*, the methodological framework and the specific methods of this research are examined. The rationale for employing a qualitative approach, and specifically a phenomenological methodology (Colaizzi, 1978) to answer the research question is addressed. Information with respect to participant selection, ethical considerations, data gathering, and data analysis are provided. In addition, qualitative conceptions of reliability, validity, and empathic generalizability are described.

In Chapter Four, *Findings*, the thematic results of the research are presented. Themes were derived through a lengthy and rigorous analysis of interview protocols as described in Chapter Three. Within each theme are a variety of experiences, stories, and details. Although the material within each thematic cluster varies with respect to the surface content, the intensity of the material, and the degree of importance that the experiences had for participants, underlying common themes are readily apparent. The stories of participants are intended to illustrate both the essential commonalities of participants' experiences, as well as the variability of meaning that intermarriage has for individuals.

In Chapter Five, *Discussion*, the thematic analysis is integrated with existing literature in the area of marital and intermarital issues. Selected social psychological literature and research on ethnic relations are also integrated when appropriate. In addition, implications for intermarried couples and their families as well as for professionals providing counselling for intermarried couples are provided. Finally, suggestions for future research are addressed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The experience of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage needs to be understood in the context of individuals, families, religions, cultures, histories, and environments (Mayer, 1985; McGoldrick & Giordano, 1996; McGoldrick & Preto, 1984). In order to contextualize the experience of Gentile people married to Jewish spouses, my literature review examines a variety of interrelated factors that impact these unions. Historical prohibitions against Jewish-Gentile intermarriage and the changing North American attitudes toward intermarriage between religious groups are examined. Next, I review demographic research on intermarriage and the characteristics of Jewish-Gentile intermarriers. Then a review of theory and research explaining the increasing rates of intermarriage in North America is presented. Literature pertaining to Gentiles who do and Gentiles who do not convert to Judaism is examined and data on the religious and cultural practices of Jewish-Gentile intermarried couples are presented. I then examine research on marital satisfaction and stability in intermarriages. Furthermore, potential interpersonal, intrapsychic, and marital challenges for those who intermarry are summarized and the potential strengths of intermarriage are also addressed. A selected review of literature on healthy marital and family functioning is examined briefly to place intermarriage in the context of marriage more generally. Finally, a synthesis of the literature review on Jewish-Gentile intermarriage is provided and implications for this research are presented.

Intermarriage: Prohibitions and Changing Attitudes

Judeo-Christian intermarriage is not a new phenomenon. Biblical examples of intermarriage between Israelites and non-Israelites can be found

throughout the Five Books of Moses, the Torah (Spickard, 1989). In fact, many of the patriarchs and those after them intermarried. Jacob's brother and sons intermarried, as did Joseph. Moses married a Midianite woman named Zippora and similarly, Samson, David, and Solomon married women who were non-Israelites. Esther, a Hebrew woman, intermarried the King of Persia and thereby saved her people from impending genocide. Ruth, a Gentile Moabite, intermarried and displayed continual loyalty to the Israelite people. Ruth's famous appeal to her mother-in-law exemplifies her devotion to the Israelites: "Entreat me not to leave you and to return from following after you; for where you go I will go, where you lodge I will lodge, your people will be my people, and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16, cited in Forster & Tabachnik, 1991, p. 21).

Although stories of intermarriage weave throughout the bible, these unions were often vehemently opposed. Throughout the Hebrew Bible there is a dissonance between the importance of endogamy for the preservation of the Israelite nation on the one hand, and the fact that people were still intermarrying (Spickard, 1989). Strong opposition to intermarriage in the patriarchal period, stemmed from a concern that the newly developing monotheistic religion would be destroyed through exogamy (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991). Prohibitions regarding intermarriage were therefore delineated in the book of Deuteronomy, in an attempt to prevent assimilation (Barron, 1972). Later, during the fifth century B.C., Ezra ordered the dissolving of all marriages in Judea between Jews and non-Jews and expelled all their non-Israelite wives and children. Traditional Jews continued to view intermarriage as forbidden for centuries later (Spickard, 1989).

In a similar fashion, Christian authorities have also prohibited intermarriage historically. During the early development of Christianity in Roman times, when the survival of the religion was vulnerable, prohibitions to

Jewish-Gentile intermarriages were legislated by the church (Spickard, 1989). In fact, during the fourth century, when Christianity had been declared the official religion of the Roman empire by Constantine, non-Christian practices of worship were forbidden. All people were forced to follow Christian forms of worship, and soon Christianity became the dominant religion of the Roman empire (Backman, 1983). Over the course of the next millennium, Christian emperors sought to expand their political power and the influence of Christianity throughout Europe. Through the Crusades and Christian missions, Christianity ultimately emerged as the official religion across Europe by 1387 A.D., and those who intermarried were denied citizenship (Barron, 1972).

Over the decades, Christian prohibitions continued to lessen as the Christian population grew in numbers and strength. Canon Law established in 1918 dictated the Catholic church's refusal to recognize the existence of Jewish-Gentile marriages unless the couple promised to raise their offspring in the Catholic faith (Gordon, 1964b). Following Vatican II (1962-1965), however, Pope John XXIII encouraged the Catholic church to increase ecumenical and interfaith contacts (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991). Since this time, Catholicism has shown greater openness to interfaith issues. Like the Catholic church, most of the Christian denominations have held strong positions against intermarriage historically (Smith, 1996). Over time, however, many of these churches have become less stringent in their opposition.

Endogamy, or marrying within your own group, has been a practice encouraged throughout history in an attempt to solidify group boundaries. Barriers to intermarriage across religious, racial, ethnic, and national lines have been created time and time again to ensure the survival of particular groups:

In societies in which the maintenance of group boundaries is considered of paramount importance, endogamy becomes prescriptive to the point of being controlled by detailed judicial dispositions. The crucial factor is not

the size or character of the group. . . . in all cases what is emphasized is the necessity to protect it from outside intrusion. (Cerroni-Long, 1984, p. 26)

In order to understand the barriers that Jewish-Gentile couples face when they choose to marry, a brief overview of religious intermarital officiation will be reviewed. As we will see, on the whole, contemporary Christian officiation rules have been far more lenient than those of the rabbinate.

Christian Wedding Officiation

Officiation rules vary between Christian denominations. The Catholic Church, for example, has agreed to officiate nonconversionary intermarriages if the couple promises to raise their children as Catholics (Backman, 1983). Some Catholic priests will agree to co-officiate with rabbis, however the reverse is extremely rare (Keysar & Mayer, 1997; Petsonk & Remsen, 1988). Even within Christian denominations, the flexibility of clergy varies. For example, I am aware of a female Catholic acquaintance (not part of this study) who sought a priest's blessing prior to her civil ceremony wedding to her Jewish husband. Although obtaining a blessing necessitated that the couple promise to raise their children as Christians, the priest offered to co-officiate a ceremony with a rabbi in a synagogue and acknowledged that the couple would need to compromise and "find their own way" with respect to religion and child rearing.

Although Protestants, Anglicans, and other Christian denominations have different rules about wedding officiation (Smith, 1996), practices often vary depending on the particular clergyman or woman. In many cases, Christian clergy will officiate as long as the couple agrees to raise the children as Christian (Petsonk & Remsen, 1988).

Although the Mormons identify themselves as Christians, many of their beliefs and practices are different from mainstream Christianity (Backman, 1983). The Mormon religion, established officially less than 200 years ago,

strongly encourages endogamy. In fact, only endogamous couples are permitted to be married in the holy Mormon Temples* where they are promised by an officiator with special authority that they will live together in happiness for eternity (Backman, 1983). Given the relative infancy of their church's development and the strong degree of observance among its membership, it is not surprising that Mormons strongly discourage exogamy. Like most Christian denominations, conversionary marriages are fully accepted by Mormons. Owing to the strong practice of proselytizing by Mormons and other Christian faiths, conversionary marriages are viewed as a means of increasing their membership.

Despite continual resistance to exogamy among many Christian churches, overall, their concern today is less than that demonstrated by Jewish authorities. Forster and Tabachnik (1991) suggest a number of reasons for the discrepancy between Christian and Jewish reactions to exogamy. First, although intermarriage rates have steadily increased in Christian groups, Christianity is nonetheless a significantly larger group. Based on earlier patterns of religious identification, Barrett (1982) estimated that approximately 85% of Canadians would identify as Christians by the year 2000, whereas in stark contrast, only 1.2% of Canadians would identify as Jews. Given this vast discrepancy in numbers, it is understandable that Christian authorities, overall are generally less concerned for their church's survival.

A second reason for the differing attitudes of the clergy and rabbinate relates to the practice of active proselytizing in many Christian denominations (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991). Unlike the Jewish tradition, which generally does not advocate proselytizing, the practice of actively seeking new converts by many Christian groups has served to increase their memberships, thereby balancing the loss of members to intermarriage and apostasy. Third, in most

cases, Christians marry inter-denominationally. Although authorities ideally wish to preserve the unique tenets of their denominations, they may be consoled by the fact that those who intermarry across denominations are still considered part of Christendom. Even when Christians do intermarry with Jews, there is likely less concern by Christian authorities, who view Christianity as an outgrowth of Judaism. Conversely, Jews do not accept Jesus Christ as the son of God and do not follow the teachings of the New Testament.

Rabbinical Wedding Officiation

The Jewish wedding ceremony is a legal contract between a Jewish woman and man who consent to marry and follow Jewish laws and traditions. Accordingly, the vast majority of rabbis in North America are vehemently opposed to intermarriage where there is no conversion of the Gentile spouse (Keysar & Mayer, 1997). The main bodies of Judaism are the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform movements. A fourth much smaller branch is called Reconstructionism. The Orthodox movements are most traditional, and the Reform and Reconstructionist, the more progressive. Because intermarriage is contrary to Jewish law, *halakhah*, Orthodox and Conservative rabbis refuse to officiate intermarital weddings. Very few Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis will officiate interfaith marriages, and those who do, generally require the couple to commit to raising their children Jewish. These rabbis are often shunned by the rabbinical establishment.

A recent study of the American rabbinate reported that 80% of rabbis refused to officiate nonconversionary marriages (Keysar & Mayer, 1997). Refusal of the Rabbinate to officiate intermarriage was primarily a function of Jewish law in earlier periods, but today, at least for many Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist rabbis, it has also become an issue of Jewish survival (Spickard, 1989).

Because statistically few nonconversionary married couples choose to raise their children solely in the Jewish faith, intermarriage is seen as a critical loss to an already vulnerable minority with an aging population, low fertility rates, and a community that moves further from its traditional ties with every passing generation (Phillips, 1997; Weinfeld, 1981). Many rabbis fear that by agreeing to officiate intermarriages, they will inadvertently be condoning these unions and will thereby encourage others to intermarry (Bellan, 1999).

Because there are far fewer Jews in Canada, and therefore, far fewer rabbis than in America, finding a rabbi who is willing to officiate an non-conversionary marriage is extremely difficult. Generally speaking, intermarrying couples living in Canadian communities with fewer Jewry, like Edmonton, need to import willing rabbis, from larger Jewish centers in Canada or the United States at their own expense.

A rabbinical controversy on the issue of interfaith officiation recently sparked in Canada illustrates the complexity of this issue (Bellan, 1999). Shortly after being hired by a Reform synagogue in Winnipeg, Rabbi Levenson, an unusually progressive rabbi, announced his plans to officiate nonconversionary marriages for both heterosexual and homosexual marriages. In response to this, five out of seven Winnipeg rabbis representing Conservative and Orthodox synagogues signed a position paper fervently opposing Levenson's decision. Interestingly, the two Conservative rabbis who chose not to sign the petition indicated that they too were against interfaith officiation. Their decision not to sign the paper, however, was due to their support of Levenson's decision to officiate same sex couples, as long as both spouses are Jewish. These two rabbis viewed interfaith marriage as being a threat to the Jewish continuity, but did not deem same sex marriage as a threat

to Jewish survival. This controversy highlights the complexity of the issue and the concern of the rabbinate for Jewish survival.

The position on officiation is drastically different if the Gentile spouse formally converts to Judaism prior to marriage. In Jewish law, those who convert to Judaism are considered to be fully Jewish, and therefore rabbis will officiate marriages when the Gentile spouse converts prior to the wedding. The process of conversion to Judaism differs depending on the movement and the individual rabbi. Usually it requires a combination of formal study, synagogue attendance, and observance of Jewish laws, holidays, and traditions over the course of a year. Mayer and Avgar (1987) reported the conversion process took approximately a year and a half on average from the point of considering conversion seriously to the actual conversion ceremony. Ironically, converting to Judaism today is likely much more difficult than in biblical times when conversion procedures were not as developed (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991).

For the past 2,000 years, Jews have generally discouraged proselytizing. In fact, traditionally, a rabbi was supposed to turn away an interested convert three times to ensure that they were sincere and committed to their decision (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991). Recognizing the growing numbers of intermarriages, however, a new policy by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1978, prompted Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis to encourage intermarrying Gentiles to convert to Judaism (Mayer & Avgar, 1987). In contrast, the Orthodox and Conservative movements do not officially advocate this practice.

Increasing Acceptance of Intermarriage

With the change of psychosocial influences, the attitudes of Jews, Christians, and the public at large have shifted toward a greater acceptance of intermarriage.

North American Jewish attitudes. Although to this day, many are concerned about intermarriage and the survival of the Jewish people, the reactions of North American Jewry to intermarriage have shifted over the generations.

First-generation North American immigrant Jewry, who were strongly tied to the old country and their traditions, vehemently opposed intermarriage (Mayer, 1985; Spickard, 1989). Earlier generations had experienced persecution and pogroms* in Europe, and the devastation of the Holocaust, where one-third of the world's Jewry were murdered by the Nazi regime (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991). The horrors of Nazi Germany occurred when a large proportion of German Jews were intermarrying. Unfortunately, intermarriage became further associated with destruction and fear.

As such, earlier North American generations tended to view intermarriage as a betrayal of the Jewish people and their traditions. It was therefore not uncommon for first generation parents of those who intermarried to consider their children dead and to sit shiva* for them. Further, those who intermarried were strongly shunned by the Jewish community (Spickard, 1989). During this time, folk myths were developed in the Jewish community suggesting that Gentile women, referred to as shiksas* , lured Jewish men away with their sexual powers (Friedman, 1982; Weinfeld, 1981).

Over the course of several generations, as social, educational, professional, economic, and religious barriers eroded, Jews and Gentiles began to meet with greater frequency, and intermarriage increased. Goldstein (1992) compared the changing attitudes of American Jewry towards intermarriage as measured by results of two National American surveys. In the first survey, conducted during 1970/71, half of the Jewish respondents indicated that it was not "all right for Jews to marry non-Jews" and "most of these

disagreed strongly" (p. 128). Twenty years later, in 1990, when American Jewry were asked a similar question about how they would hypothetically respond if their child was considering intermarriage, far fewer opposed such unions:

Among the respondents classified as Jews by religion, only 22 percent reported that they would oppose the marriage, and far fewer of those who were secular Jews, only 4 percent, reported opposition. Indeed, one-third of the Jews by religion and 45 percent of the secular respondents said they would support such a marriage, and about half of each group said they would accept it. (p. 128)

Forster & Tabachnik (1991) summarized the gradual shift in Jewish attitudes in the United States: "Jewish response generally has moved from total rejection, to grudging acceptance, to resignation, and to growth in attempts to react in a positive manner as gentile spouses began to seek conversion in greater numbers" (p. 11). After 1990, however, when the National Jewish Population Survey (Kosmin et al., 1991) reported dramatic increases in intermarriage rates among American Jewry, the Jewish community was stunned, and an outcry of concern for Jewish survival became intensified.

Although there is greater acceptance in the United States toward intermarriage, Canadian Jewry has not responded as quickly. Intermarriage is on the rise in Canada, however the increase has been significantly slower than in the United States. Demographic differences and immigration patterns have resulted in a more traditional Jewish community in Canada. Canadian sociologist Weinfeld (1981) suggested that Canadian Jewry is more resistant to intermarriage than its American counterpart:

It must be stressed that the Canadian case is by no means a mirror of the American. Although the trend in Canada is towards increasing parental acceptance of intermarriage, the degree of acceptance is far lower in Canada than in the United States. The same factors that produce the lower rate of intermarriage in Canada (notably the larger immigrant proportion) make Canadian parents' acceptance of intermarriage far more problematic. (p. 379)

Alarmed by the rising rates of intermarriage in Canada, and fearful that Canadian Jewry will follow in the footsteps of their Southern neighbors, literature examining the issue of intermarriage has recently surfaced.

Christian and North American attitudes. Christian attitudes toward intermarriage have shifted over time as well. The majority of Christians opposed marriage with Jews during the early 1900's, and Gentiles who married Jews often suffered discrimination (Spickard, 1989):

In the early years of east European immigration, non-Jews were fairly unanimous in despising Jews and rejecting intermarriage. . . . In the late years of last century and the early years of this, Gentiles of all classes discriminated against Jews and harassed non-Jews who married them. (p. 197)

The disapproval began to decline slowly. Following the Second World War, North Americans gradually developed more acceptance for religious and ethnic differences. In 1950, 57% of people in a national American survey reported that they "definitely would not marry a Jew", whereas in 1962 the number had decreased to 37% (Stember, 1966, cited in Ellman, 1987, p. 1). Similarly, results of a 1984 Canadian Gallop Poll (Lambert & Curtis, 1984) demonstrated a sharp decline among the Canadian public's opposition towards intermarriage of all kinds between the 1960's and 80's. In 1968, 28% of Canadians opposed intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews and the same proportion opposed intermarriage between Catholics and Protestants. By 1983, however, only 10% of Canadians opposed Jewish-Gentile intermarriage, and 9% opposed intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics. Similar trends have been reported in the United States (Ellman, 1987).

Demographic Research on Intermarriage

As attitudes toward intermarriage have become more accepting, the rates of intermarriage between Christian denominations and between Jews and

Gentiles have increased dramatically. As a result, a large body of North American demographic research has attempted to determine how many people are intermarrying. However, accurate rates of intermarriage are difficult to elicit due to a number of challenges. First, defining the construct of intermarriage is not as simple as it might first appear (Yinger, 1968). Should, for instance, intermarriage be defined by religion at birth or by current religious affiliation? Studies that use religion of birth elicit higher intermarital rates than those which use current religious affiliation. This is the case because people often convert to their spouse's religion prior to or following marriage (Glenn, 1982).

Another definitional issue is deciding whether crossing denominational boundaries is a sufficient criterion for intermarital status or whether intermarriage applies only to those who cross distinctly different religions. For example, should marriages between members of two different Protestant denominations be considered intermarriage? Similarly, should a marriage between a Reform and Orthodox Jew be considered intermarriage? The degree of difference between theology, rituals, and practices and the extent of each spouse's religious identity will likely render qualitatively different marital experiences. As one begins to scratch the surface of these issues, the complexity of defining intermarriage begins to unfold.

Another challenge is in obtaining accurate intermarital rates of intermarried couples. This is more problematic in the United States where the church and state are separated. As a consequence, national American statistics cannot be elicited from census data because religious affiliation is not identified (Goldstein, 1992). In addition, religion of spouse is generally not included on American marriage certificates.

Intermarital records can be elicited somewhat more easily in Canada because the census has enumerated Jewish people by religion and ethnicity

since the turn of the century. In addition, Statistics Canada reports the religions of brides and grooms as reported on marriage licenses. These data are often inconsistent, however, because data on brides and grooms are not collected from each province yearly. The province of Quebec, for example, stopped reporting religious intermarriage since 1973 (Larson and Munro, 1990). This significantly impacts the accuracy of intermarriage rates, because data derived from the 1991 census indicate that almost 30% of the Jewish population live in Montreal (Torczyner & Brotman, 1995). Another caution is that census data and statistics from civil marital certificates do not provide information about the religions of spouses at birth or the number of conversions prior to or following marriage.

American Intermarriage Rates

Although accurate intermarriage rates are extremely difficult to ascertain, one trend is clear. Intermarital rates in North America have risen steadily over the past several decades. Based on an analysis of national American surveys, Kalmijn (1991) reported that intermarriage between Catholics and Protestants have "increased dramatically between the 1920's and the 1980's" (p. 797). Using national data from General Social Surveys in the United States, Lazerwitz (1995) reported that between 1985 and 1989, approximately 8% of Protestants and 15% of Catholics chose marital spouses of different faiths who did not convert to their respective religions. Another 5% of Protestants and 13% of Catholics had married people who had converted to their faiths. Forster and Tabachnik (1991) reported that the rate of interdenominational marriage among all Christians is greater than 50%.

Jewish people historically have been among the most reluctant religious groups to intermarry (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991; Spickard, 1989). Despite this, intermarital rates have also risen sharply during the past several decades.

Results of the landmark 1990 American National Jewish Population Survey (Kosmin et al., 1991) indicated that prior to 1965, approximately 9% of American Jewish people married Gentile spouses who retained their Gentile status. This number increased dramatically to 25% between 1965 and 1974, and then again to 44% between 1975 and 1984. Demographers were shocked when data suggested that since 1985, approximately 52% of the American Jewry married Gentiles who retained their religious status and another 5% married converts to Judaism.

Canadian Intermarriage Rates

Consistent with the American trend, the rate of interfaith marriage among all religions has also risen in Canada over the past several decades. Larson and Munro (1990) provided a useful overview of Canadian trends in religious intermarriage, documenting data derived from Canadian marriage licenses published by Statistics Canada. They reported that approximately 6% of all Canadian marriages were interfaith marriages in 1927, whereas the proportion had increased to 54% by 1982. In 1927 approximately 5% of Canadian Protestants and 7% of Catholics intermarried spouses of different faiths, whereas these rates increased to 58% and 44% respectively by 1982.

Although rates of Jewish intermarriage are lower in Canada than in the United States, they have nonetheless increased significantly over the decades. The proportion of Jewish intermarriages increased from approximately 3% in 1927 to 28% in 1985. In 1990, approximately 16% of Jewish married couples in Greater Toronto were married to spouses who were not Jewish at birth (Brodbar-Nemzer, Cohen, Reitzes, Shahar, & Tobin, 1993). Prior to 1961, only 2% of Torontonians Jews intermarried people who remained Gentile and 1% entered conversionary marriages. Since 1986, however, 20% were intermarrying people who retained their Gentiles status and 10% entered

conversionary marriages. The extensive research on intermarital rates provides relevant information about the prevalence of intermarriage in North American society, however, it does not provide insight into the experiences of those who intermarry.

Who Intermarries?

Another body of research on Jewish-Gentile marriage seeks to identify the demographic characteristics of people who intermarry. Earlier studies showed that American Jewish males intermarried significantly more often than did their female counterparts. By 1990, however, the rates of Jewish male and female intermarriage were equivalent (Kosmin et al., 1991). The seemingly drastic increase of intermarriage among American female Jewry, however, may be a function of earlier methodological flaws (Mayer, 1996, cited in Crohn, 1998). Weinfeld reported that 5% more Canadian Jewish males intermarried during the 1970's than did their female counterparts. He suggested that this gender discrepancy might be explained by differing socialization of females and males, and by the fact that there are demographically fewer Jewish Canadian women than there are men.

Glenn (1982) reported that American Jews are much less likely to intermarry than Catholics, who are in turn less likely to intermarry than Protestants. Larson and Munro's study (1990) sheds light on the religious combinations of Canadian intermarried couples generally, and on Jewish-Gentile couples specifically. They reported that for all Canadian religious intermarriages, "those who outmarried tended to marry into the largest religious groups: Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and the United Church" (p. 245). They indicated further, that for most religious groups, Catholics were most likely chosen as spouses when intermarriage occurred. In 1982, for example, 9% of

Jewish brides and grooms married Catholics, whereas 4% married Anglicans (Larson & Munro, 1985).

American researchers have also investigated the connection between the trend toward intermarriage in first and subsequent marriages. Based on the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, Lazerwitz (1995) reported that 10% of American Jewish people in endogamous marriages had been married more than once. In contrast, 19% of Jews in conversionary marriages and 31% of Jews in nonconversionary intermarriages had been married more than once.

Medding et al. (1992) indicated that approximately 14% of first marriages in their American sample were intermarriages, whereas this proportion rose to 20% in second marriages and 46% in third marriages. The researchers concluded that Jewish people are less likely to marry endogamously in subsequent marriages due to the limited number of suitable Jewish mates and because "factors related to starting and raising a family may no longer be relevant" (p. 9). As we have seen, researchers have often investigated how many people intermarry and who intermarries. In addition, many have tried to explain why people choose to intermarry.

Causes of Intermarriage

Endogamy, or marrying within your own group, has long been considered the norm and vitally important for healthy marital and family functioning. This is not surprising considering the staunch beliefs, rules, and attitudes opposing exogamy discussed earlier. As such, much of the literature also reflects the notion of endogamy as the norm. Consequently, theorists and researchers have tried to explain why people marry across religious boundaries.

Psychological Explanations

Many of the psychological explanations for intermarriage are fragmented at best and tend to reflect earlier societal norms. Accordingly, many investigators begin with the premise that intermarriage is deviant behavior and paint a pathologizing picture of intermarriers. Resnik (1933), for example, suggested that religious intermarriers fall into one of four categories: The emancipated person, the rebellious person, the detached person, and the adventurous person. Furthermore, Berman's (1968) extensive theorizing and research based on data in Germany in the early 1900s, attributed intermarriage to a neurotic personality and claimed that those who intermarried were more likely to be reckless, rebellious, defiant, and existentially insecure. Psychoanalytic explanations interpreted intermarriage on the part of Jewish males as an unconscious attempt to escape psychological incest by marrying women different from their mothers (Gordon, 1964b). Intermarriers were also said to be overly attached or enmeshed with mothers or fathers who parented excessively.

These studies were conducted at a time when intermarriage was rare and socially unacceptable both in Jewish and Gentile communities. Sociologist Egon Mayer (1985), currently one of the foremost researchers in the field of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage, suggested that "changing social trends" and an increased acceptance of intermarriage "have rendered those explanations obsolete" (p. 102). Nonetheless, even recent literature has suggested that religious intermarriage represents deviant behavior (Hoge & Ferry, 1981). These researchers reported that intermarriage can be explained by strained familial relationships and by parents who fail to promote the norm of endogamy.

Others have painted a healthier picture of intermarriage, postulating that intermarriers may be highly independent individuals who are appropriately

differentiated from their families of origin (Crestler & Leon, 1982). In contrast, based on his experience as a rabbi and a family therapist with intermarried couples of many backgrounds, Friedman (1982) suggested that in some cases, intermarriers are emotionally triangulated with their parents and responsible for balancing their parents' marriages. Intermarriage, from this perspective, is often an attempt on the part of the intermarriers to gain emotional distance from their parents. Friedman's ideas are reminiscent of Bowen's (1978) theory, which suggests that individuals who are emotionally triangulated and fused with their family of origin need to find ways to separate emotionally through a process of differentiation. Although some intermarried spouses may struggle with these issues, Rosen and Weltman (1996) noted that Jewish endogamous couples very often struggle to separate emotionally and to set appropriate boundaries with their parents. It is therefore unclear how inmarriers and intermarriers differ.

McGoldrick and Giordano (1996), based on clinical experience, suggested that intermarriers "are usually seeking to rebalance their own ethnic characteristics, moving away from some values as well as toward others" (p. 20). These observations, although interesting, have not been substantiated by research. Most contemporary researchers conclude that overall, intermarriers today do not differ psychologically from their inmarrying counterparts (Johnson, 1980; Larson & Munro, 1990; Mayer, 1985; McCutcheon, 1988).

Propinquity, Demography, and Field of Eligibles

A number of sociological theories have attempted to explain why intermarriage has increased over the past several decades. These theories identify a variety of demographic factors and social structures that may have a bearing on the trend toward higher rates of exogamy. Proponents of the "propinquity theory" argue that as the physical closeness of individuals increases, so will the chances that they meet, date, fall in love, and eventually

marry. From this perspective, intermarriers do not differ from those who inmarry. Rather, "they are simply individuals who find themselves, in the prime of mate selection . . . in a social environment where there is a high probability that they will meet and fall in love with members of the opposite sex who are not of their own ethnic or religious group" (Mayer, 1985, p. 99).

Over the course of the past fifty years, social and economic changes have moved North American Jewry out of their segregated ghettos and into mainstream society. As a consequence, the opportunities to meet people in their neighborhoods, in university, at work, and in recreational settings have increased dramatically. In other words, the *field of eligibles* for Jewish people has significantly increased (Mayer, 1985). The fact that overall, intermarrying Jews tend to have higher levels of academic achievement than their inmarrying counterparts (Torczyner & Brotman, 1995) has supported the notion that people often meet their spouses in educational settings.

In addition, demographic studies have demonstrated differing patterns of intermarriage based on geographical location and population composition. Brym, Gillespie, and Gillis (1993) critiqued Cohn (1976), who argued that increased intermarriage among Canadian Jewry was a sign of anomie, an erosion of group solidarity. The former researchers argued that Cohn underestimated structural explanations, or the varying opportunities that Jewish people have to inmarry.

The centralization of Jewish people in Canada helps explain the lower Canadian intermarriage rates from those in America. Three out of four Canadian Jewish people live in Toronto and Montreal, cities each with Jewish populations of over 100,000 (Torczyner & Brotman, 1995). Although there are significantly more Jews in the United States, only half of American Jewry live in cities with over 100,000 Jews.

Generally, in smaller Canadian Jewish communities, like Alberta, where the Jewish "field of eligibles" is smaller, intermarriage rates are higher than in larger communities (Larson & Munro, 1990; Torczyner & Brotman, 1995). Larson & Munro (1990) reported that 44% of Albertan Jewish brides and grooms intermarried in 1986, versus 26% in Ontario. Population size is only one factor, however. Older Jewish communities tend to offer more institutions that nurture Jewish values and encourage Jewish people to meet. As such, the small, but older Winnipeg Jewish community has lower rates of intermarriage than does the larger, but less established Jewish community of Vancouver (Torczyner & Brotman, 1995).

Although these theories provide some insight into the reasons for intermarriage, they do not tell the whole story. For example, intermarriage rates in the United States are extremely high, even in cities with the largest concentration on Jewry (Goldstein, 1992). In addition, research has demonstrated that overall, there is a preference for inmarrying despite population constraints and demographic challenges. Based on national surveys in the United States, Glenn (1982) reported that endogamous rates of Protestants (84%), Catholics (62%), and Jews (80%) between 1973 and 1978 would have been markedly lower at approximately 66%, 26%, and 2% respectively, had random mating occurred.

Assimilation

Another theory suggests that intermarriage is a byproduct of assimilation; that over the generations, minority groups become distanced from traditional practices and are absorbed by the value systems of the majority culture. Gordon (1964a) proposed that "cultural assimilation" involves acquiring the language, norms, and culture of a the dominant group, whereas "structural

assimilation" occurs when people develop relationships and marry individuals in the majority group.

Phillips (1997) suggested that generational factors are strong determinants of assimilation and intermarriage:

The foreign-born immigrant generation usually continues to live surrounded by the people, customs, habits, and language of its homeland. The American-born second generation grows up entirely in one country, but in two cultures, the parental culture of the old country and the contemporary culture of the new American homeland. Their third generation children grow up primarily in American culture, with only their immigrant grandparents linking them to the old world. For the fourth generation, whose parents and grandparents are all native-born Americans, there are no living links to the old country. (p. 5)

Indeed, the data show that the cumulative American rate of intermarriage is below 15% in the first and second generation, increases each successive generation, and approaches 60% in the fourth generation.

Whereas the United States has historically advocated a melting pot philosophy of assimilation, Canada has adopted a multiculturalism policy encouraging a national mosaic of diverse groups. These differing ideologies may have influenced the lower intermarital rates in Canada somewhat. More likely, however, is Weinfeld's (1981) explanation. Essentially, he noted that immigration patterns have resulted in Canada having more foreign born Jewish people who have stronger ties to traditional Jewish life. Tulchinsky (1993) added that Canadian Jewry has remained more traditional than American Jewry over the decades, because Canada was the recipient of significantly fewer German Jewish immigrants in the 19th century who followed Reform Judaism and who were influenced by enlightenment philosophies.

Earlier this century, when exogamy was extremely rare, it was thought that Jewish people intermarried in an attempt to gain social status and to assimilate into mainstream society (Mayer, 1985). As Jewish people have achieved high levels of educational, professional, and economic achievement,

over the decades, however, most researchers currently agree that intermarriage is no longer a means of gaining social acceptance: "As Jews have become more integrated into the American society, mixed marriage has become simply the frequent consequence of that integration, and no longer a means to attain it" (Phillips, 1997, p. 71). Furthermore, Mayer (1985) suggested that Jewish people, who have a reputation for being well educated, socially mobile, and interested in the arts, have become desirable mates for Gentiles. As we have seen, the attitudes in North America have generally shifted toward a greater acceptance of intermarriage. As a result, intermarriers of all religions face less third party opposition that would discourage them from intermarrying (Kalmijn, 1991).

Secularization and Love

The secularization theory is widely used to explain intermarriages between all North American religious groups (Glenn, 1982; Kalmijn, 1991; Larson & Munro, 1990). Proponents of this theory argue that society is moving away from the religious and toward the secular. Following a national survey of Canadians, Bibby (1987) concluded that despite the fact that majority of Canadians identify as Christians, there has been a significant decline in religious participation over the past several decades. Whereas 60% of Protestants and 83% of Catholics attended church in 1946, forty years later these proportions had dropped to 27% and 43% respectively. Further, Larson and Munro (1990) reported that in 1982, 64% of marrying Canadians who identified themselves as having "no religion" married a spouse who also had "no religion". Interestingly, they concluded, that endogamy was more likely between people who identified as having "no religion" than it is was between people who reported having a religious affiliation.

Although there are many exceptions, there is a general consensus that overall, Jewish people who intermarry are less observant than their inmarrying counterparts (Mayer, 1985; Mayer, 1979). Canadian Jewish intermarriers are more likely to reside in communities where proportionally more people identify themselves as being Jewish by "ethnicity" as opposed to being Jewish by "religion" (Torczyner & Brotman, 1995). In explaining the rapid increase in intermarriage between American Protestants and Catholics between the 1920's and 1980's, Kalmijn (1991) suggested that this growing phenomenon "reflects a secularization of *cultural* [italics in original] differences between religious groups--a convergence. . . in attitudes about marriage, fertility, child rearing, and sexual matters" (p. 798).

Another explanation of intermarriage suggests that along with the trend toward secularization, there is an increased emphasis in Western society on the value of marrying for romantic love (Cerroni-Long, 1984). Historically, marriage has often been viewed as fulfilling social needs such as stability and group boundaries, whereas contemporary Western cultures view marriage as a means to happiness and individual fulfillment (Barron, 1972). As Western society increasingly values individual choices, traditional ideas emphasizing the precedence of the community over the individual are challenged. Factors such as love, the available field of eligibles, and the retreat of third party influences help explain why some individuals with stronger religious identifications choose to intermarry. Medding et al. (1992) suggested that many contemporary Jews believe that they can intermarry and still maintain their Jewish identity.

Often intermarriage occurs despite the initial reluctance of spouses to marry outside of their religious groups. In his study on Jewish-Gentile courtships, Mayer (1961) conducted open-ended interviews with Jewish-

Gentile intermarried couples to examine the process that ultimately leads interdating couples to marry. The majority of the 45 couples, were described by Mayer as "reluctants" who initially did not want to marry out of their faiths. Despite this, couples were attracted to the characteristics of their partners and believed that they would be able to end the relationships before they became serious. Eventually, however, couples grew to love one another and felt unable to end the relationships based on religious differences alone.

Mayer's (1961) study, along with descriptive accounts by others (Cowan & Cowan, 1987; Mayer, 1985; Schneider, 1989), demonstrate the complexity of interrelated factors associated with the progression to marriage in these couples. Aradi (1988) suggested: "Rarely is there one single reason for marrying outside one's faith; rather, motives tend to be multiple, complex, and often unconscious" (p. 74). This is consistent with theory and research in the general population suggesting that the progression from courtship to marriage is often a function of interconnected factors such as: "interpersonal processes that occur between partners", "interaction between partners and their networks", "intrapsychic factors", and "circumstantial or environmental factors" (Cate & Lloyd, 1988, p. 422).

Multiple Explanations

Overall, most researchers agree that intermarriage occurs as a result of numerous interconnected factors. As Kalmijn (1998) noted, "Marriage patterns arise from an interplay between three social forces: the preferences of individuals for certain characteristics in a spouse, the influence of the social group of which they are members, and the constraints of the marriage market in which they are searching for a spouse" (p. 398). Johnson (1980) suggested that a combination of population demographics, the availability of suitable

spouses, the social distance separating groups, and the intrinsic endogamies of religious groups impact intermarriage. Phillips (1997) concluded:

Marriage is the result of both opportunity and willingness. In order for marriages to take place between Jews and non-Jews, there must be opportunities for them to meet in a climate of social tolerance, equality, and mutual acceptance. In addition, they must be willing to marry each other". (p. 3)

As we have seen, much theory and research has attempted to explain why people intermarry. In contrast, far less has examined the actual experience of intermarriage.

Who Converts, Who Doesn't, and Why?

Because the majority of research on Jewish-Gentile marriage has been motivated by concerns for Jewish survival, research has tried to determine who converts to Judaism and why. In so doing, researchers have attempted to determine the net loss of Jewish identity due to intermarriage. In addition, some have been interested in determining why Gentiles convert in order to learn how others might be encouraged to do so. Furthermore, the research attempts to uncover the needs of Gentiles and their families that may be addressed in Jewish outreach programs. This quantitative research is useful in gaining some information regarding the experiences of Gentiles married to Jews. It represents a newer trend among American Jewry to understand Gentiles married to Jews. Canadian research has unfortunately lagged behind.

Based on a 1990 study of Torontonians, Brodbar-Nemzer et al. (1993) reported that one-third of Jewish-Gentile intermarriages resulted in the conversion of the non-Jewish spouse to Judaism, whereas two-thirds of spouses retained their Gentile status. In contrast, it is extremely rare for a Jewish person to convert to Christianity. In Mayer and Sheingold's (1979) American study of intermarried couples, 21% of the born Christian spouses had converted to Judaism, whereas only 3% of the born-Jewish spouses had

converted out of Judaism. Lazerwitz (1995) reported that currently in the United States approximately 16% of Gentiles who marry Jews convert to Judaism. Whereas conversionary marriages have remained fairly constant, as we saw earlier, the rates of American nonconversionary Jewish-Gentile marriages have dramatically increased.

Women have converted to Judaism more than their male counterparts throughout the decades and continue to do so today. In fact, conversion to Judaism is at least twice as common for American Gentile women as it is for their male counterparts. Moreover, 70% of American "Jews by choice" (those who have formally converted to Judaism and those who identify as Jews despite not having converted) are women (Kosmin et al., 1991). Not surprisingly, most conversions to Judaism, at least in America, are undergone through the Reform branch of Judaism. Mayer and Avgar (1987) indicated that 63% of their American sample were converted by a Reform rabbi, 24% were converted by a Conservative rabbi, and 13% were converted by an Orthodox rabbi.

Researchers have sought to determine when Gentiles choose to convert and why they do so. Approximately 40% of Gentiles who convert do so prior to marrying their Jewish spouse, and another 22% convert prior to the birth of their first child (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991; Mayer & Sheingold, 1979). Mayer and Sheingold reported that the majority of those who converted following marriage had given much thought to their decision. Approximately one-third reported converting out of personal conviction (32.2%), whereas others reported converting for the sake of their mates or relatives (38%), for the sake of their children (8.9%), or for a combination of these reasons (20.9%).

Not surprisingly, converted Gentiles tended to have Jewish spouses and in-laws who were more religious than those of nonconverted Gentiles. Also,

converts tended to have a greater desire for a religious identity (84%) than did their nonconverted counterparts (45%), and fewer converts (37%) than non-converts (59%) were "satisfied" with the religion of their adolescence. Mayer and Avgar (1987) concluded that many converted in order to please their spouses or in-laws and that conversion was more likely when the Gentile parents were accepting of their decision.

Mayer and Avgar (1987) indicated that approximately 13% of nonconverted Gentiles had considered conversion at some point, an additional 16 % had considered conversion "but not seriously", whereas 71% had not considered conversion at all:

Of the nonconverts who had considered conversion, one-third felt it would have gone 'against their religious convictions', while about one-fifth felt that they 'could not do it' to their parents or families. Two fifths reported that religion was unimportant to them or to their spouses. (p. 9)

Interestingly, over half of the nonconverted Gentiles indicated that they felt they could be part of the Jewish community without converting.

Attitudes of Intermarriers During Courtship

Mayer and Avgar's study (1987) also provides useful data regarding the attitudes of Jewish and Gentile spouses about intermarrying prior to marriage. The vast majority of nonconverted Gentiles (67%) reported that they were unconcerned that their spouses were Jewish before they married, and 74.4% indicated that their Jewish spouses had been unconcerned about their Gentile status prior to marriage. Few nonconverted Gentiles (2.6%) were unhappy about their spouses being Jewish prior to marriage, whereas 14.4% reported that their Jewish spouses were unhappy that they were Gentile. Interestingly, few converted Gentiles (4.6%) indicated that they were unhappy that their spouses were Jewish prior to marriage, whereas 40.6% indicated that their Jewish spouses were unhappy that they were Gentile. Consistent with Mayer

(1961), this research demonstrates the ambivalence that some intermarriers feel when they intermarry.

The Challenges of Conversion

As one would expect, the conversion to Judaism is challenging for some. Medding et al. (1992) recognized that conversion to Judaism is a difficult process, often requiring "distancing, disaffiliation, and cutting ties" with a person's religious and cultural heritage (p. 18). Research suggests that converts tend to identify with Judaism strongly as a religion, but often do not feel the same sense of Jewish identity from a cultural, ethnic, or historical perspective as do born Jews (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991; Lazerwitz, 1995; Mayer & Avgar, 1987).

Mayer and Avgar (1987) indicated that approximately one-third of the converted Gentiles in their study reported that the conversion process "was not adequate to enable them to fit comfortably into the Jewish world" (p. 24). Additionally, "half the respondents indicated feeling at least some inner strain between their opting for Judaism and the parental heritage they left behind" (p. 24). Interestingly, although most converts felt an inner sense of belonging in the Jewish community "three-fourths felt that the Jewish community did not understand them" (p. 24), and "Over two-fifths of respondents described their reception by fellow Jews as ranging from cordial to suspicious and unaccepting" (p. 24).

According to Jewish law, converts are supposed to be considered full-fledged Jews, however, in reality, often converts are not considered fully Jewish by the Jewish community. Dr. Forster, a sociologist who herself converted to Judaism, and Tabachnik, a Conservative rabbi, identified the challenges of converting to Judaism. According to Forster & Tabachnik (1991), whereas

overall, converts to Christianity are accepted fully as members of the church, this is not always the case in Judaism:

In Christian circles, a person from outside the faith or denomination who converts is considered a full member, loses all former identifications, and when counted is considered Catholic, or Baptist, or Lutheran, or whatever. And when the person marries an insider, the marriage is considered one faith. Not so, in Judaism. . . . Marriages between a convert to Judaism and a Jew are still considered intermarriages by Jews To a Christian, the focus of conversion is a religious one. Religious conversion in a marriage context is an accepted model among Christians. . . . It is relatively easier for a sincere gentile to practice Judaism than it is to be a recognized and respected member of the Jewish community. It is difficult for a gentile to absorb ethnic empathy, commitment, and self-identification, to speak of we, us, and our, when speaking of Jews. (p. xv-xvi)

These researchers reported that nonconverted Gentiles in their study often faced greater adversity than did their converted counterparts.

Practices of Intermarried Couples

A growing body of research, generated mainly in the United States, has examined the religious and traditional practices of intermarried Jewish-Gentile couples. Medding et al. (1992) compared the level of Jewish identification and behaviors of Jews in three kinds of marriages: inmarriage (two born Jewish people), conversionary marriage (a Jewish born person and a person who converted to Judaism), and a mixed marriage (marriage between a born Jewish person and a Gentile person who did not convert to Judaism). Jewish identity was measured on the basis of ten dimensions: synagogue membership, synagogue attendance, Sabbath* candle lighting, participation in a Passover seder*, fasting on Yom Kippur*, lighting Hanukkah* candles, membership in Jewish organizations, donating to Jewish charities, visiting Israel, and having predominantly Jewish close friends.

Interestingly, they concluded that overall, the level of Jewish identification among Conservative and Reform conversionary Jewish marrieds fared higher than their endogamous Jewish counterparts. In contrast, they concluded that mixed marriage showed the lowest level of Jewish identification. This trend was also reported in a Canadian study examining the practices of converted and nonconverted marriages in Toronto (Brodbar-Nemzer et al., 1993).

Medding et al. (1992) reported that 69% of American Jews in mixed marriages showed low levels of Jewish identification and often had a Christmas tree to celebrate the holidays. They reported that only 2% of inmarried Jewish couples reported having a Christmas tree during the holidays, whereas 22% of conversionary couples, and 62% of mixed couples reported having Christmas trees in their home. Based on the presence of the Christmas tree alone, these researchers identified these intermarried Jews as being in "dual-identity households" regardless of their level of Jewish identification. The use of the Christmas tree as the sole criterion for Jewish identity sheds light further on the great concern of the Jewish community for its survival and its fear that Jewish traditions will be diluted and destroyed through assimilation.

Although this research provides useful information about the behavioral practices of intermarried couples, it does not uncover the meaning of their choices and experiences for them. For example, how did the couples decide which traditions to uphold? How did they feel about their decisions? These pertinent issues were not addressed in this research.

Religious Child Rearing Practices

Intermarried couples need to choose how they will raise their children. They may choose to raise their children in the faith of the Jewish spouse, in the faith of the Gentile spouse, in a combination of both faiths, or they may choose a

secular upbringing, or introduce an entirely different religion to their children. Researchers have been particularly concerned about the type of religious upbringing of children of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage, again due to issues of Jewish continuity. Because my research focuses on marital experiences, rather than on the experiences of children of intermarried couples, this review will not address all pertinent issues pertaining to children of intermarriage, but rather will focus on parenting issues.

American Jewish women who intermarry are twice as likely as their Jewish male counterparts to raise their children as Jews. Lazerwitz (1995) reported that 52% of American Jewish women in exogamous marriages raise their children as Jews, whereas only 25% of intermarried Jewish men do so. Brodbar-Nemzer et al. (1993) reported that all Canadian inmarried and conversionary couples in the Greater Toronto area identified their children as being raised Jewish, whereas only 39% of mixed couples reported this.

In addition to the child rearing practices of intermarried parents, a body of research has also investigated the religious identity of children of intermarriage and their psychological adjustment. Although many researchers have hypothesized that children of intermarriage would be less adjusted than children with endogamous parents, research has not supported this (Frideres & Goldstein, 1974; Mayer, 1985; 1983). The literature generally suggests that the parents should make a choice as to how they will raise their children and follow through with this decision.

It has been suggested that it is parental conflict and inconsistency in religious child rearing that is responsible for confusion and feelings of insecurity, rather than the actual form of religious upbringing chosen (Kaye, 1980; Petsonk & Remsen, 1988). Kaye (1980) concluded: "It's difficult to evaluate how a child benefits from religious education, because so much

depends on the manner in which it is presented, the honesty and awareness of the parents who teach, and the individual experience of the child" (p. 206-207).

Satisfaction and Stability in Intermarriage

Marital satisfaction in intermarriages has been measured using surveys, questionnaires, and divorce rates. Greely (1980) found that 70% of young Catholics who were married by a priest reported being very satisfied with their marriages, whereas 63% of mixed marriages involving a Catholic and non-Catholic without the approval of the church reported being very satisfied. Using data from six American national surveys conducted between 1973 and 1978, Glenn (1982) reported that dyadic satisfaction in interfaith couples involving Jews, Catholics, and Protestants was lower than homogenous marriages of these same groups.

Glenn (1982) noted, however, that other variables might explain these effects, as opposed to religious differences. In addition, he reported that overall, individuals in marriages where one or both spouses identified themselves as secular, reported lower levels of marital satisfaction than individuals in religiously homogenous or religiously mixed marriages. Lehrer (1996) suggested that future research investigating the connection between religious commitment and marital stability would be useful. She hypothesized that if the level of religious commitment in one or both spouses is high, this would likely have an adverse affect on marital stability. Nelson (1991), using psychometric measures, investigated the marital satisfaction among samefaith, conversionary, and interfaith marriages where at least one spouse was Jewish. Interestingly, significant differences were not found between these groups.

Divorce rates have also been used to assess the marital stability of intermarried couples as compared to their endogamous counterparts. The

research generally suggests that divorce is more common for intermarried couples than for their endogamous counterparts. Glenn (1982), however, commented that it is difficult to know whether it is the differing religious backgrounds that are to blame for the higher divorce rates. Rather, he suggested, other factors may explain the higher divorce rates in interfaith marriages. Glenn speculated that negative parental interferences and other influences might contribute to the stress intermarried couples face and thereby adversely affect the stability of these marriages.

Further, as we have seen, in some cases, marrying outside one's religious or ethnic group often requires a person to break away from previous norms. This may suggest, that overall, intermarriers are more willing than their than inmarrying counterparts to break away from traditional rules. They may therefore be more willing to divorce if their marriages prove unhappy.

Kosmin, Lehrer, and Mayer (1989) reported that Jewish-Gentile couples in first marriages are at significantly higher risk for divorce (32%) than Jewish-Jewish couples in first marriages (17%). Nonetheless, they are also less susceptible to marital breakdown than the North American population at large (50%) (Walsh, 1993). Given the amount of external opposition often reported by Jewish-Gentile couples and the challenges associated with intermarriage, some might argue that it is surprising that the divorce rates are not higher.

Challenges of Intermarriage

Although all married couples experience some difficulties during their relationships, intermarried couples can confront unique challenges (Aradi, 1988; Cowan & Cowan, 1987; McGoldrick & Giordano, 1996). As intermarriage is becoming increasingly more prevalent in North America, a growing body of literature has emerged that describes the challenges of Jewish-Gentile

intermarriage. Numerous books written for the general public on the topic have described the process and challenges of intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles based on interviews with intermarried couples (Cowan & Cowan, 1987; Kaye, 1980; Petsonk & Remsen, 1988; Schneider, 1989). Although these books offer useful insights, they generally describe the experiences of intermarried couples living in the United States. Furthermore, they are written in an anecdotal fashion and do not provide detailed information about the methods used to elicit and analyze the interview material.

Another body of literature has been developed by therapists who describe clinical experiences of working with interfaith and interethnic couples (Alper, 1992; Aradi, 1988; Clamar, 1991; Eaton, 1994; Falicov, 1986; Gleckman, 1990; Greenstein & Howell, 1993; McGoldrick & Preto, 1984; Sousa, 1995). This literature is also useful, but again, is generally based on couples in the United States and the case studies are written in an anecdotal fashion. More importantly, this literature is generated by therapists working with intermarried couples who are experiencing marital distress. In addition, a growing body of research has been developed through outreach efforts of the Jewish community in an attempt to identify the current needs of Jewish-Gentile couples (Avgar & Mayer, 1987; Forster & Tabachnik, 1991; Geffen & Mayer, 1997). The following section describes the common challenges of intermarriage as addressed in the literature.

External Opposition

Based on clinical experience working with intermarried couples, McGoldrick and Preto (1984) described some of the external hurdles often associated with intermarriage. The most common of these include dealing with resistance of parents, locating amenable clergy to preside over the wedding, and negotiating familial hostility. Mayer (1961) reported that most of the 45

Jewish-Gentile couples he interviewed in the New York city area faced opposition from parents, family, or friends prior to marriage. He reported that couples delayed informing their parents about their courtship, and if they did share the information, they often underplayed the seriousness of the relationship. Parents sometimes attribute their children's intermarrying as a rejection of traditions they have tried to pass on and might attempt (usually unsuccessfully) to prevent the union (Cowan & Cowan, 1987; Mayer, 1961; Schneider, 1989).

Falicov (1986) asserted that parental approval of one's marital spouse is important for a person's psychological well-being. Opposition by parents can prove extremely stressful throughout the marital life cycle, resulting in familial tension, conflict, divided loyalties, and in some cases cut-offs. Although, as we have seen earlier, reactions to intermarriage have changed over time, it is not uncommon to face strong opposition. Rosen and Weltman (1996), in their description of Jewish families, commented that "Today, even the most liberal and assimilated Jewish families remain highly sensitive to intermarriage, which may be perceived as a betrayal of family and community" (p. 614). The following excerpt reflecting the Canadian Jewry's concern about intermarriage as described by Weinfeld (1981) is instructive:

Today, intermarriage is seen not only as an event that has consequences for the families involved but also as a communal issue requiring a communal response. Any given intermarriage may remove a stream of descendants from the future Jewish population totals. Moreover, a high rate of intermarriage weakens the norm of Jew marrying Jew and thus makes marriage to Gentiles more acceptable in the future. And even if the Gentile partner converts or makes some form of Jewish identification, some experts argue that this family's quality of commitment to the Jewish community is invariably weaker than that of "true" Jewish families. (p. 366)

Whereas Jewish intermarriers may be unsurprised by this reaction, Gentile spouses unfamiliar with the historical, psychosocial context of the opposition

may face additional challenges. In their study of nonconverted and converted Gentiles, Forster and Tabachnik (1991) concluded:

It became clear that the struggle to be fully accepted was a significant negative issue for the respondents. . . . Jews need to understand that in the Christian community from which these people come from, potential converts are lovingly wooed and supported, and those who convert are fully accepted, highly valued, and aided in numerous ways. (p. 142)

In addition to challenges that Gentiles may face vis a vis the Jewish community, they may also face opposition from their clergy, families, and communities.

Friedman (1982) suggested that parents of intermarriers sometimes use cultural differences to rationalize their rejection of their son- or daughter-in-law. This "cultural camouflage", he theorized, serves to mask underlying feelings related to the separation and individuation process of their son or daughter. Because intermarriage threatens the current family functioning, parents can react with great intensity, even when they do not strongly identify with their religious or cultural backgrounds. Falicov (1986) noted the challenge that therapists have in distinguishing between intermarital difficulties and those that are symptomatic of general marital or family issues.

Intrapsychic and Intermarital Challenges

Those who intermarry may struggle with intrapsychic ambivalence about religious, ethnic, or cultural differences. This in turn, can lead to challenges within the relationship itself.

Religion, ambivalence, and development. Not only are intermarried couples likely to face external opposition to their marriages, but in addition, spouses themselves may struggle internally with ambivalent feelings about intermarrying. As noted earlier in Mayer and Avgar's (1987) study, some converted and nonconverted Gentiles indicated that they were ambivalent about intermarrying outside of their faith prior to marriage. In addition, many reported that they perceived ambivalence on the part of their Jewish partner. Of

note, however, 54.6% of converts and 30.2% of nonconverts reported that were "happy" that their spouse was Jewish prior to marriage. In contrast, only 2.1% of converted Gentiles and 11.2% of nonconverted Gentiles felt that their Jewish spouses were happy that they were not Jewish prior to marriage. Similarly, John Mayer's (1961) study on Jewish-Gentile suggested that many of the spouses were initially reluctant to marry due to religious differences.

Fowler (1981), considered one of the foremost researchers in the area of theology and human development, draws from the work of Erikson, Piaget, and Kohlberg. He has suggested that there are six stages of faith development that people may undergo. Most adults, he believes, begin at stage three, which he refers to as "Synthetic-Conventional Faith", where values and beliefs passed on by one's parents are accepted without questioning. Some adults, he notes, remain at this stage indefinitely, whereas others, move to stage four, called "Individuative-Reflective Faith". During this stage, young adults who are individuating from their parents may begin to question the tenets and assumptions of their beliefs.

In their discussion of Fowler's (1981) work, Peterson and Remsen (1988) noted that often people intermarry during the stage of their development, when autonomy is deemed more important than religious and community values. Although many people remain at this stage, others, usually in their thirties or forties may later move on to stage five, which Fowler refers to as "Conjunctive Faith". During this stage, adults turn back to religion in their search for meaning with respect to the paradoxes of life and death. If one spouse shifts in their beliefs and priorities, whereas the other does not, this can lead to marital or intermarital challenges.

Duncan (1992), in her discussion of interfaith marriage between Jews and Christians, suggested that these unions bring together not only people of

two different faiths, but also, people with differing systems of meaning. Duncan argued that a faith structure, strong or weak, is a "cultural-linguistic context for perceiving and responding to life experiences" (p. 106). Jewish people, she suggested are "bound in covenantal relationship to God" (p. 111) and stress the notion of peoplehood, rather than the individual. Also, for many Jewish people, active involvement in ritual and traditions "are an affective expression of their understanding of the on-going and historical relationship to God" (p. 112). Although Christian theologies can vary significantly, more generally, "Christianity is a religion that understands God's truth as revealed through Jesus Christ" (p. 114), and as such focuses on individual truth. Consequently, Duncan suggested that couples in interfaith marriages often need to negotiate these systems of meaning as they impact their lives throughout the life cycle. Kaye (1980) also noted that

Your religious beliefs are your first language. . . . The ideas we form in the earliest years affect our development for the rest of our lives, and religious influences are part of the picture. We can never completely erase them, even if we eventually reject them. (p. 13)

Not only can the influence of religion be challenging, but so can issues of ethnic identity and culture.

Ethnic identity and cultural challenges. The sense of belonging to a group is considered a fundamental psychological need (McGoldrick & Giordano, 1996). Citing the work of Erik Erikson, Spickard (1989) suggested that ethnic identity is critical for a person's sense of meaning and ability to find a place for him/herself in the world. Although people often think of intermarriage as an issue of religious differences, it is also one of ethnicity and culture. Phinney (1996) described ethnic identity as being "an enduring, fundamental aspect of the self that includes a sense of membership in an ethnic group and the attitudes and feelings associated with that membership" (p. 992). During

early stages of development a person may be disinterested in their ethnicity of may "take it for granted", however as a person matures, ethnic identification can be felt more strongly.

Jewish identity involves an interweaving of religious and ethnic components. Based on the data from the 1981 census, Brym (1993) reported that 84% of Canadian Jewry identified themselves as Jews by both religious and ethnic origin. Further, Jewish students at the University of Manitoba viewed inmarriage as being important for "cultural identity" more than did French, German, Ukrainian, Polish, British, and Scandinavian students (Driedger, 1975).

Consequently, it is not uncommon for Jews to feel a strong sense of Jewish identity, culturally and historically, even if they are not observant in a religious sense (Mayer, 1985). Rosen and Weltman (1996) suggested that "Some families who have a distant, even hostile attitude toward organized religion and Jewish institutions still nearly decompensate in the face of a child's prospective intermarriage" (p. 614). Similarly, Gentiles may be affiliated with any number of religions and ethnic backgrounds. Spickard (1989) suggested that although Christians may not be cognizant of their ethnic identifications, they nonetheless share a history and culture that may become activated when they encounter differences.

Ethnicity is connected not only with identity, but also with culture, including norms, behaviors, values, and attitudes (Phinney, 1996). Crohn (1998) emphasized that culture impacts all areas on our lives:

Culture molds attitudes toward time, family, eating, money, sex, and monogamy. Cultural norms affect how anger and affection are expressed, how children are disciplined and rewarded, how strangers and friends are greeted, and what roles men and women play. (p. 295)

The Mormon health code, for example, advocates the consumption of vegetables, fruit, grain, and meat, but prohibits the drinking of alcohol, tea, coffee, and also forbids smoking (Backman, 1983). Some Jewish people maintain the dietary practices of kashrut* and others often enjoy kosher-style foods.

McGoldrick and Giordano (1996) suggested that in some cases, differences or traits that were initially viewed as attractive can later become ill-favored: "Typically we tolerate differences when we are not under stress; in fact we may find them appealing. However, when stress occurs tolerance for differences diminishes" (p. 19). This is consistent with research on mate selection which suggests that both premarital and marital partners tend to choose mates with similar values and characteristics (Cate & Lloyd, 1992).

Based on clinical experience, therapists have suggested that cultural differences may affect the style of communication, handling of conflict, and attitudes toward intimacy, dependence, grief, and sadness (Falicov, 1986; McGoldrick & Preto, 1984; Sousa, 1993). McGoldrick and Giordano (1996) contrasted the common ethnic traits of Jewish people as compared to 'Anglos' that can lead to marital challenges:

Jewish families are often seen as valuing education, success, family connections, encouragement of children, democratic principles, verbal expression, shared suffering, and having a propensity to guilt and a love for eating. Anglos have been characterized as generally emphasizing control, personal responsibility, independence, individuality, stoicism, keeping up appearances, and moderation in everything. (p. 10)

As in all marriages, the negotiation of differences is of utmost importance when conflicts arise. At times, however, intermarried spouses may not recognize that their struggle is cultural in origin. Others, in contrast, may use cultural or

religious differences as an excuse to justify behavior or maintain the status quo (Falicov, 1986; Friedman, 1982; McGoldrick & Preto, 1984).

Family Life Cycle Challenges in Inter marriage

Families comprise those who have a shared history and a shared future. They encompass the entire emotional system of at least three, and frequently now four generations, held together by blood, legal, and/or historical ties. (McGoldrick et al., 1993, p. 406)

The Family Life Cycle Model views families as "systems moving through time" and recognizes the "multigenerational context of family connections" can profoundly impact our lives (p. 405). The model delineates many of the developmental phases that couples typically undergo during early marriage, marriage with children, and marriage in later life stages. This paradigm suggests that it is at times of life cycle transition and crisis that religion and ethnicity become particularly important to marital and family adjustment. Religious and ethnic heritage provide rituals, symbols, and folklore that facilitate coping throughout key life cycle events such as birth, death, marriage, and divorce (McGoldrick & Preto, 1984).

Additionally, it is at key life cycle transitions that intermarried couples may experience feelings of isolation and a desire to return back to their roots and to the familiarity of their own group. A letter written by a Jewish intermarried man in 1906 asking for advice from the editor of "The Daily Forward", a popular Yiddish American newspaper of the time, illustrates this phenomenon very well:

Dear Editor,

For a long time I worked in a shop with a Gentile girl, and we began to go out together and fell in love. We agreed that I would remain a Jew and she a Christian. But after we had been married for a year, I realized that it would not work.

I began to notice that whenever one of my Jewish friends comes to the house, she is displeased. Worse yet, when she sees me reading a Jewish newspaper her face changes color. She says nothing, but I can

see that she has changed. I feel that she is very unhappy with me, though I know she loves me. She will soon become a mother, and she is more dependent on me than ever.

She used to be quite liberal, but lately she is being drawn back to the Christian religion. She gets up early Sunday mornings, runs to church and comes home with eyes swollen from crying. When we pass a church now and then, she trembles.

Dear Editor, advise me what to do now. I could never convert, and there's no hope for me to keep her from going to church. What can we do now? (Isaac Metzker, 1971, p. 45)

Indeed, the reemergence of religious and cultural values through the life cycle can prove to be detrimental to relationships if they are not resolved effectively.

The developmental stage of child rearing is one that often challenges both endogamous and exogamous couples. Inter marriage, however, can pose unique challenges. Deciding on the religious upbringing of children can be difficult for some intermarried couples (Cowan & Cowan, 1987; McGoldrick & Preto, 1984; Peterson & Remsen, 1988). Further, the process of raising step-children in intermarried blended families may result in further complications (Baptiste, 1984).

Cowan and Cowan (1987) suggested that the birth of a child can result in the reemergence of latent ethnic and religious identity. This may result in spouses struggling to decide in which faith they will raise their children. It is often during life cycle transitions that religious or cultural identities previous latent reemerge:

The history of a group and the socialization of its individual members in particular families converge in shaping the consciousness of each and every man and woman. The extent to which fragments of a religious or ethnic tradition will rise to salience from the recesses of a person's consciousness will depend, therefore both on the exigencies of the ongoing life cycle and on history and biography. (Mayer, 1985, p. 147)

Aradi (1988) adapted the family life cycle model to illustrate the developmental tasks that interfaith couples often need to master from courtship, to marriage, to parenthood, to later life stages of marital life. He suggested that

religious compatibility is dependent upon four interrelated factors including: "1. comparative level of religiosity, 2. level of tolerance for differences, 3. mutual expectations", and "4. ability to create unique and mutually satisfying religious expression" (p. 75). Typically, couples enter therapy when they find they feel unable to successfully move through a key life cycle transition (McGoldrick & Preto, 1984).

Strengths of Intermarriage

Although the literature has tended to focus on the challenges of intermarriage, McGoldrick and Preto (1984) noted that intermarriages may open a family system to "new patterns, connections, and the possibility of creative transformations" (p. 348). Further, in his examination of interracial and interethnic issues, Ho (1990) suggested a number of possible benefits of intermarriage. Intermarriage, he noted, may further motivate couples to prepare more thoroughly for marriage, having faced outside resistance. In addition, he indicated that they may have a greater degree of commitment, having banded together in the face of external opposition. Further, intermarriage may encourage an increased level of self-other differentiation as well as an increased level of mutual acceptance, respect, and tolerance. In addition, he indicated that intermarriage may broaden the horizons of spouses and their children (p. 18-21). Falicov (1986) also noted:

In spite of potential difficulties, cross-cultural marriage offers unique possibilities for creative and functional matches. The factors that make for success or failure, happiness or unhappiness, are extremely complex and cannot be reduced merely to degrees of cultural commonalities and differences. (p. 430)

Intermarriage in the Context of Marriage

As noted earlier, to some extent, all marriages are intermarriages in some way. Neither endogamy or exogamy guarantee healthy marital and

family functioning (Falicov, 1986; Mayer, 1985). My study examines the experience of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage from a Gentile perspective. As the literature has suggested, however, it can be difficult to disentangle intermarital issues from marital dynamics more generally. Therefore, a literature review on intermarriage would not be complete without examining the phenomenon in the broader context of marriage. Although the scope of this review negates the possibility of doing an extensive review of theories and research on marital functioning, a brief and focused examination of selected literature in the area is warranted to place intermarriage in the context of all marriages.

Healthy Marital and Family Functioning

Given high divorce rates in marriages, generally at about 50%, researchers have investigated the factors that lead to healthy marital and family functioning (Walsh, 1993). Many contemporary models of marital functioning are grounded in theoretical frameworks, recognizing that a marriage between two people does not occur in isolation, but rather involves individuals, families, social networks, and environments (Walsh, 1993). Walsh presented the following useful summary of key interconnected variables recognized across many clinical and research-based models that are associated with healthy marital and family adjustment:

1. Connectedness and commitment of members as a caring, mutually supportive relationship unit ("We are family").
2. Respect for individual differences, autonomy, and separate needs, fostering the development and well-being of members of each generation, from the youngest to the eldest.
3. For couples, a relationship characterized by mutual respect, support, and equitable sharing of power and responsibilities.
4. For nurturance, protection, and socialization of children and caretaking of other vulnerable members, effective parental/executive leadership and authority.

5. Organizational stability, characterized by clarity, consistency, and predictability in patterns and interaction.
6. Adaptability: Flexibility to meet internal or external demands for change, to cope effectively with stress and problems that arise, and to master normative and nonnormative challenges and transitions across the life cycle.
7. Open communication characterized by clarity of rules and expectations, pleasurable interaction, and a range of emotional expression and empathic responsiveness.
8. Effective problem-solving and conflict resolution processes.
9. A shared belief system that enables mutual trust, problem mastery, connectedness with past and future generations, ethical values, and concern for the larger human community.
10. Adequate resources for basic economic security and psychosocial support in extended kin and friendship networks and from community and larger social systems. (p. 58-59)

In reviewing factors that contribute to marital maintenance, Levinger & Huston (1990) further reported that issues of trust, conflict management, and self-disclosure are important. They suggested that not only is communication of feelings beneficial, but also that the acceptance of the disclosure by the spouse is important. In addition, they noted that self-sacrifice often enhances trust in marital relationships.

Effective communication and conflict management prior to marriage has been shown to predict marital stability (Cate & Lloyd, 1992; Markman & Hahlweg, 1993). Also, results of observational studies with married couples suggested that marital satisfaction and the frequency of disagreements are not good predictors of divorce (Gottman, 1994). Instead, Gottman reported that ineffective styles of conflict resolution including blaming, denial, stonewalling, contempt, and disengagement are highly correlated with marital dissolution. Beavers and Hampsen (1993) described severely dysfunctional families as being:

limited in negotiating conflicts, in adapting to the developmental demands and situational crises. . . . Such families have poorly defined power structure; unclear, ineffective, and unsatisfying communication; extreme problems in interpersonal boundaries; few negotiation skills; and a pervasively depressed or cynical tone. . . . The lack of individuality or differentiation of self in these families leads to profound difficulties. . . . Severely disturbed families feel chronically disappointed, frustrated, angry, resentful, and guilty. In these families and individuals, a basic developmental task of evolving trust, has been aborted and remains unfinished. (p. 88-89)

In an attempt to explain how couples and families cope with stressful events, McCubbin & Patterson (1982) have adapted the crisis theory, developed originally by Hill (1949, as cited in McCubbin & Patterson, 1982). The adapted theory suggests that generally, couples who face increased external stressors will be at higher risk for relationship distress. However, the degree to which the stressors will impact couples is dependent upon a number of variables including the resources of each individual, the resources of couple together, and the social supports available to them.

Summarizing their extensive review of theory and quantitative research on the longitudinal course of marital quality and stability, Karney and Bradbury (1995) concluded that overall, the past fifty years of research has focused on outcome and prediction of marital outcomes as opposed to the process by which marriages develop over time. Although these researchers were referring to quantitative research, I hoped that my qualitative study, using rich description, would shed light on the processes and experiences of Gentile people married to Jewish spouses.

Synthesis of Intermarriage Literature

As we have seen, much of the literature on Jewish-Gentile marriage has been generated in the United States and focuses on the concerns of Jewish people in the context of a minority group concerned for its survival. As such,

most of the theory and research has been sociological in nature, focusing on identifying the number of people intermarrying, their characteristics, and the causes of intermarriage.

The literature review illustrated that the rate of Jewish-Gentile marriage has increased substantially in the United States over the past several decades and has also climbed in Canada, but more slowly. The rise of Jewish-Gentile marriage in North America is generally understood to be a result of interconnected factors. The loosening of social barriers combined with demographic changes have resulted in a larger "field of eligibles" for people of different religious and cultural backgrounds to meet in a context of increasing acceptance. A growing tendency toward secularization in North America and an emphasis on marrying for love and fulfillment have also resulted in less third party interference to discourage intermarriers. Ultimately, contemporary generations, less tied to older traditions and norms have become more willing to cross religious and cultural boundaries.

Because there is a concern in the Jewish community that intermarriage will result in a loss of Jewish members and in a weakening of Jewish identity, research has attempted to determine who intermarries, what motivates Gentiles to convert to Judaism, and in which kinds of religious and cultural practices intermarried couples engage. Jewish people who intermarry are often well educated and tend to be less religiously observant than their inmarrying counterparts. Canadian Jewish and Christian people tend to intermarry people from the largest Christian denominations. Previously, Jewish men intermarried more than their Jewish female counterparts, but this is no longer the case in the United States. In Canada, it appears that Jewish males currently intermarry somewhat more than do females. Jewish-Gentile marriage is also much more likely to occur in second or subsequent marriages than in first marriages.

Substantially more intermarried Gentiles convert to Judaism than do Jewish people out of their faith. Furthermore, significantly more intermarried female Gentiles convert to Judaism or identify as Jews by choice than do their male Gentile counterparts. Those who convert to Judaism often do so for a combination of reasons including having a personal conviction, having a desire to please their spouses or in-laws, and having a preference for providing their children with a unified religious upbringing.

Converts to Judaism tend to convert through Reform Judaism. In addition, overall, they are at least, if not more observant religiously than their born Jewish counterparts. In contrast, they tend to struggle more with cultural aspects of Judaism and with developing an ethnic and tribal Jewish identity. When intermarried Gentile spouses do not convert, the Jewish-Gentile couple tends to have lower levels of Jewish identification and to report lower levels of religious and cultural practices than do their inmarried or conversionary married counterparts. Jewish-Gentile nonconversionary couples are also more likely to include Christian traditions in their home. Whereas conversionary couples tend to raise their offspring solely as Jews, nonconverted couples are less likely to do so. Interestingly, nonconverted Gentile women are twice as likely to raise their children solely as Jews as their nonconverted Gentile male counterparts.

People who marry across religions or Christian denominations tend to report lower levels of marital satisfaction than religious homogeneous couples, but more satisfaction than those couples where one or both spouses identifies as having no religion. It has been suggested, however, that it is difficult to know whether this is a function of marital satisfaction or a result of other factors such as outside interference. Furthermore, a unique study using psychometric measures to compare the marital satisfaction of samefaith, conversionary and interfaith marriages where one spouse was Jewish, found no significant

differences between these three groups. Jewish-Gentile couples tend to have higher divorce rates than do Jewish endogamous couples, but appear to have lower rates than the North American population at large. Again, it is difficult to know whether divorce rates are a function of intermarriage itself or other factors.

As Jewish-Gentile marriage rates have grown, literature examining the potential challenges and benefits of these unions has emerged. Numerous books have been written describing the experiences of Jewish-Gentile marriages geared toward the lay public. There is also a body of theory and descriptive case studies by therapists who work with intermarried couples.

The literature suggests that although all marriages can be challenging, intermarriage may pose additional hurdles. Couples may face adversity from parents, families, religious authorities, and communities. Further, intermarriers may struggle with ambivalence about marrying across religious or cultural boundaries. Even when challenges are not immediately evident, couples may discover differences throughout the life cycle as they realize that their religious or cultural identities are more important to them than they previously realized.

Furthermore, differences which seemed attractive initially may become challenging with the onset of life stressors and life cycle transitions. In addition, agreeing on the religious upbringing of children can be difficult for intermarried spouses. The literature suggests that communication and flexibility is particularly vital for these couples. As we have seen in the literature on healthy marital functioning, these are also factors associated with marital adjustment more generally.

Although much of the literature focuses on challenges of intermarriage, others have suggested that neither intermarriage nor inmarriage guarantee marital stability or happiness. Some have suggested that intermarriers may be motivated to prepare more thoroughly for marriage given the adversity they

face. In addition, they may also develop a high level of respect and acceptance of one another. Finally, intermarriage may be a catalyst for personal and interpersonal growth.

Implications for This Research

As we have seen, much of the previous research on Jewish-Gentile marriage had asked 'who' and 'why' questions: Who is intermarrying? Why do they intermarry? Other studies had answered 'how many' or 'how much' questions, measuring the number of people who are intermarrying and the extent to which intermarried people partake in religious observance. The research has tended to focus on a Jewish perspective, given the great concern of the Jewish community for its survival. The majority of this research has been motivated to find ways to prevent or reduce the number of Jewish people marrying Gentiles. A recent shift in intermarital research led by American researchers, however, has begun to focus their attention on understanding the needs of intermarried couples in order to provide outreach support for them.

Numerous descriptive works on the topic of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage have emerged recently as intermarriage has become a growing phenomenon. Although the descriptive accounts provide valuable information on the experiences of intermarried couples, these publications are typically geared toward a general audience and are written in an anecdotal fashion. They do not provide detailed information regarding the methods of data collection or analysis, leaving issues of reliability and validity in question. Furthermore, although the literature generated by therapists working with intermarried couples is also useful, it is based on distressed intermarried couples in the context of counselling. Finally, the descriptive research is generally based on the experiences of intermarried couples living in the United States.

Although intermarriage rates in Canada are also on the rise, particularly in smaller Jewish communities like Edmonton, far fewer studies have examined the needs of Canadian intermarried couples, and fewer still have focused on the experiences of Gentiles married to Jews in Canada. Given the growing Canadian intermarital rates, it will be increasingly important to understand the experiences of intermarried people living in Canada.

As we have seen, because of differing demographics and immigration patterns, on the whole, Canadian Jewry appears to be more traditional than its American counterpart, and may be less accepting of intermarriage. In addition, there are fewer intermarried couples in Canada, fewer outreach programs geared to meet their needs, and significantly fewer Canadian rabbis who are willing to officiate interfaith weddings.

Because previous research has tended to focus on Jewish concerns in the United States, it was decided that a focus on Gentile intermarital experiences in a Canadian city with high intermarital rates would be useful. Accordingly, this study uses a clear qualitative methodology in an attempt to uncover a variety of experiences of intermarriage from the perspective of Gentile people married to Jewish spouses and living in Edmonton, Canada.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

As I reviewed the literature on the area of Jewish-Gentile marriage, it became apparent that there had been relatively little contemporary scholarly research examining the experiences of Jewish-Gentile intermarried couples. Further, even significantly less research on the topic had been conducted in Canada. Finally, much of the existing literature focused on Jewish concerns, and consequently, research on the experiences of Gentiles married to Jews was particularly lacking. Recognizing a gap in this area of the literature, I developed my research question: "What is the experience of being married to a person who is Jewish from the perspective of a person who is Gentile?" Once this research question was established, the next step was to choose a method best suited to illuminate this aspect of human experience.

Research Approach

Because marriages are embedded in everyday life, a person's intermarital experiences cannot be separated from his or her contextual life-world. The meaning of being married to a person of a different religion or culture is dependent upon a complex network of interrelated factors such as intrapsychic and interpersonal variables, gender, culture, history, expectations, and values. Qualitative methods, with their emphasis on exploration, understanding, and description, allow for the uncovering of complex personal, interpersonal, and psychodynamic issues that cannot easily be captured in quantitative studies (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; van Manen, 1990). These methods share in common a commitment to using "the logic of natural language as the preferred form for understanding human affairs" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 45). Qualitative methods are particularly appropriate because they make possible the uncovering of contradictions inherent in many life experiences that are otherwise difficult to elicit.

With this in mind, a qualitative method was chosen in order to gain an understanding of the experience of Gentile people married to Jewish spouses.

Given the many qualitative approaches, it was necessary next to choose the most appropriate method, best suited to answer the research question (Morse, 1994). A phenomenological approach was specifically selected because this method provides rigorous and effective strategies for uncovering meaning in human experience, or that which is "present or given in awareness" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 41). Phenomenology seeks not only to describe, but also to uncover underlying commonalities of meaning in human experience that are not readily apparent on the surface (van Manen, 1990).

The dynamic, interpersonal nature of the interview process encouraged in phenomenological research invites rich descriptions of experience that may not be easily captured using other data gathering techniques. Rather than predicting the relevant issues of intermarriage, as is required when developing questionnaires, surveys, or structured interviews, the open-ended interview places more autonomy in the auspices of the participants, who are closest to the phenomenon at hand (Kvale, 1996). As such, the interview allows participants to lead the way and to reveal the experiences that are most salient to them.

Polkinghorne's (1989) citing of the unique strengths of phenomenological methodology are particularly relevant to the study of intermarriage:

- (a) we can appreciate and be more sensitive to these experiences, a particularly significant consequence for those in the helping professions; (b) some of the understandings derived from logical-mathematical theories and research can be enlarged on, deepened, and in some cases, corrected; and (c) social action and public policy can be amended so as to be more responsive to the way in which we experience various situations. (p. 58)

In asking the 'what?' questions of intermarriage, that is "what is the experience of intermarriage?", the phenomenological approach places an emphasis on description, exploration, and understanding, as opposed to measurement,

prediction, and explanation. Because understanding the meaning that an experience has for a person is a prerequisite for providing effective support, counselling, and therapeutic intervention, a research method geared toward uncovering meaning from an insider perspective was deemed most appropriate for the study of intermarriage.

Presuppositions

An essential component of qualitative methods is that researchers be aware of their own knowledge and preconceptions of the studied phenomenon (Giorgi, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989). The validity of phenomenological analysis rests on the researchers' rigorous self-reflection and on their monitoring and recording of their preconceptions and perspectives throughout the research process. In so doing, researchers become conscious of the presuppositions that they bring to the topic at hand. Additionally, they attempt to move from a "natural attitude" toward a "transcendental attitude" (Valle & King, 1978) in order to understand the phenomenon with new eyes.

Acknowledging that researchers can never be neutral observers of a phenomenon they seek to understand, qualitative researchers make their presuppositions apparent to their readers (Guba, 1981; Osborne, 1990). Given this knowledge, the readers, who ultimately judge the empathic validity of qualitative research, can better determine whether the analysis is rooted in the data or in the assumptions or preconceptions of the researchers.

Like many researchers before me, my interest in intermarital issues is not accidental. As a Jewish woman who is married to a Gentile man, I bring my own personal experiences of intermarriage to this research. By sharing my background and perspectives, I hope that my readers will gain insight into the personal understandings that I brought to this research.

I grew up in a Conservative Jewish home and went to parochial school from kindergarten until the end of grade 10. Growing up, I was part of a tight knit Jewish community, and essentially, until I was 16 years of age and transferred to a collegiate program in grade 11, I had very little exposure to people who were not Jewish. Both my grandfathers and my paternal grandmother had emigrated from Russia to flee pogroms and persecution, and to seek freedom, safety, and 'the good life'. When I was a young girl I learned that members of my family were killed during the Holocaust and that my father faced discrimination when he grew up in a neighborhood where few Jews lived.

Growing up, I knew very few people who married outside of the Jewish community. In my entire extended family going back several generations, only one uncle intermarried a woman who later converted to Judaism. A couple of years ago, I stumbled upon another family incident of intermarriage. I learned that a great aunt (my paternal grandfather's sister) whom I had never heard about before, had been disowned by her family in Russia between the 1920's and 1930's when she married a Gentile Russian man. Her mother, Rose, my great paternal grandmother, was later murdered by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

When I met and fell in love with a non-Jewish man with a United Church background, I struggled with forces both internal and external. I felt the pull of thousands of years of history and feared that intermarrying would mean that I was betraying my heritage, my family, and my Jewish community. So often I had been told that intermarriage would be responsible for destroying the Jewish people. My parents, grandparents, and those before them sacrificed to provide me with the right to practice my faith and with opportunities that were not available to Jews before me. Would intermarrying, I wondered, render all their efforts in vain? I had also been warned that religious differences were difficult to surmount and often caused marital breakdown. Despite being blessed with a loving, supportive,

and communicative relationship, I struggled with these old messages and feared that my marriage would ultimately be doomed to failure.

My partner, Neil, has always been very supportive and we talked a great deal about religious and cultural differences before we married. He didn't identify strongly with his United Church upbringing, but was nonetheless a spiritual person, and was very supportive of my Jewish identity. Neil didn't feel the same emotional tugs that I did about intermarrying, and his parents, now my in-laws, didn't seem very concerned either.

My parents, who cherished their strong Jewish identities, struggled when I began interdating, and it was hard for me to feel that I was disappointing them. Over time, however, they came to know my partner, and they were supportive when we announced our engagement. Because Neil and I were unable to find a rabbi who was willing to officiate our wedding, we had a civil ceremony which incorporated many Jewish traditions. My mother helped arrange for the creating of a chuppah*, a special Jewish marriage canopy, under which Neil and I were married, and my father recited the traditional seven blessings during our ceremony that a rabbi would normally have recited. Their support meant a great deal to me. In addition, Neil's parents were very flexible and didn't oppose our decision to have a wedding that would reflect our commitment to maintain a Jewish home.

Over the seven years of my relationship, I have endeavored to find a balance between building a meaningful, loving, relationship with my partner, while at the same time maintaining a connection with my Jewish heritage, as well as my religious and cultural identity. I have also nurtured my relationships with my Jewish family and community, while finding my own place within my husband's family. My journey has been filled with questions, intrigue, growing pains, and healing. Although this process has not always been easy, it has and continues to be one filled with meaning, learning, and growth.

When I embarked upon this research, I had much more of a connection with the Jewish experience of intermarriage than with the Gentile perspective. Because I identified strongly as a Jew, the decision to marry outside of my faith and culture was not an easy one. In contrast, my husband didn't struggle in the same way because he didn't identify as much with the religion of his birth, nor did he feel as strong a cultural pull. He has always been a flexible person who doesn't 'sweat the small stuff', so although he needed to learn about Jewish traditions and customs, he seemed to adjust very well to the Jewish world. I wasn't sure if his experience was an anomaly, and I wondered if others, who were more tied to their backgrounds, would struggle more.

Because of my own experiences, prior to embarking upon this research I guessed that Gentile spouses would be more likely to perceive that intermarital struggles were more salient for their Jewish partners than for themselves. But I was also curious as to how Gentile people who were more tied to their religious traditions would feel. Given my own experience, I also supposed that couples would have discussed religious and cultural issues somewhat prior to their marriage, but I wasn't sure how much.

Ultimately, my own experiences, coupled with my genuine curiosity and interest in the Gentile experience motivated me to pursue this research. How did people who were not Jewish experience their intermarriages? Were their thoughts and feelings similar to mine or were they vastly different? Did they experience adverse reactions from their own or from their partners' communities, and if so, how did they make sense of this? Given the concern of intermarriage in the Jewish community as a whole, I wondered how Gentile people who were married to Jews felt in this context. Were they aware of this controversy? Did they have feelings of guilt, frustration, or anger, or were they more emotionally removed from the issue? Were there personal gains and losses as a result of marrying a Jewish person?

These are some of the questions that went through my mind at the beginning of this research process.

In order to be aware of my changing perspectives and reactions regarding intermarriage, I recorded my thoughts, feelings, and ideas in a journal throughout the research process. Further, I discussed my reactions with colleagues and a research supervisor in an attempt to make my presuppositions explicit. This provided me with a greater freedom when analyzing the interview transcripts and helped me focus on eliciting the meaning inherent in participants' descriptions. I will include my reactions to the participants' experiences as part of the discussion, in Chapter Five.

Participants

Purposive sampling (Kvale, 1996) was employed to ensure that participants of varying backgrounds would be able and willing to verbally describe their experiences of being intermarried. Because phenomenological research attempts to find underlying structures of a particular phenomenon despite varying content and details (Polkinghorne, 1989), I developed the following inclusion/exclusion criteria in an attempt to obtain rich and diverse descriptions of intermarital experiences. Male and female Gentiles living in Alberta who were currently married to Jewish spouses were selected. Given these criteria, I anticipated that participants would range in terms of gender, age, and the number of times and years that they had been married. I also expected that participants' religious observances would vary both in form and degree. In addition, I anticipated that participants would be married to individuals who varied in their level of commitment to Judaism. Converts to Judaism were excluded since the focus of this research is on the experience of non-Jews who are married to Jewish people.

Participants were identified through an advertisement in a local Jewish newspaper (Appendix A), through a Reform synagogue newsletter (Appendix B),

by word of mouth, and via contacts in my professional network. Ten interested participants contacted me via telephone and were informed about the nature, purpose, and method of the research. I had not met any of the participants or their spouses prior to our first telephone contact. An initial meeting was arranged with those who showed interest in participating. The final number of seven participants was guided by the ongoing analysis, until thematic saturation was reached. Of the three individuals who did not ultimately participate, one did not meet the inclusion criteria, one indicated she was reluctant to reveal her private experiences in the context of an interview, and a final participant was not interviewed because thematic saturation had already been reached.

Participants were four males and three females, ranging in age from 27 to 55 years old, who had been intermarried between 2 months and 27 years. All had post-secondary education and were professionals. Most had been intermarried for a minimum of seven years, whereas the participant who had been married for only two months had lived common law with his spouse for two years prior to being married. Most couples had been involved for several years prior to marriage. Four participants had been married only once, making intermarriage their only marital experience, whereas three participants had been married previously. Of the participants who had been previously married, two had been intermarried interdenominationally, and one had been married endogamously. Two participants had children as a product of their current marriage and three individuals had children through previous marriages.

Participants had been raised in various religious denominations including the Catholic, United, Anglican, and Mormon churches. Two participants strongly affiliated with the religions of their upbringing, one described himself as affiliating in a moderate way, and four described themselves as being either "lapsed" or not strongly affiliated. Accordingly, two participants reported attending their respective

churches on a weekly basis, one reported attending his church occasionally and on holidays, and the remaining four indicated that they rarely attended church. In addition, two participants indicated that they were considering conversion to Judaism in the future.

Two participants described their Jewish spouses as being strongly affiliated with Reform Judaism and one participant described her husband as being a strong Zionist. The remaining four described their spouses as identifying as Jews with a minimum to moderate level of religious observance. Nonetheless, these four spouses were described as identifying moderately to strongly with Judaism from a cultural perspective.

Some participants were knowledgeable about Jewish religion and culture prior to meeting their spouses, whereas others had little information about or contact with Jewish people prior to meeting their partners. Six participants indicated that they attended Jewish religious services at the Reform synagogue with their Jewish partners, whereas one participant reported attending an Orthodox synagogue with his wife. All participants described some form of change in their own and their partners' religious observances over the course of their intermarriages.

All but one participant described their relationships to be satisfying overall, whereas one indicated that she and her husband had recently separated for reasons not directly related to religious or cultural differences. I chose to interview this participant despite her separated marital status, because I believed that she might provide invaluable information about her intermarital experiences given her decision to end her long-term marriage.

Procedure

A formal ethics proposal for this research was passed by the Department of Educational Psychology Ethics Review Committee prior to my eliciting participants

for interviews. Interested participants contacted me via telephone and were asked where they would be most comfortable meeting. Depending on their choices, initial interviews were arranged at either my home, my office, or at their respective homes.

Following our initial telephone contact, each interested individual received a letter reviewing the nature, purpose, and method of the research that had previously been discussed via telephone (Appendix C). The letter clarified the commitment required of participants and my ethical responsibilities to them. Informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw their participation at any time were reviewed. Participants were informed that counselling referral sources would be provided in the event that discussing their marriages during the interview process proved to be distressing in any way.

Data were collected through two audio-taped unstructured interviews (Kvale, 1996; Polkinghorne, 1989) with each participant. Each interview ranged in length from one and a half hours to three hours. During the first interview, informed consent (Appendix D) was obtained, and participants were encouraged to ask any questions that had surfaced for them since our telephone contact.

Establishing a relaxed atmosphere of safety is critical in eliciting rich descriptions of personal experience (Becker, 1986; Kvale, 1996). Given the personal nature of the topic, it was especially important that participants feel a sense of rapport and comfort with me. Several participants asked me about my religious background, my marital situation, and my position on intermarriage. I explained to these participants that I am Jewish and intermarried to a man who was raised in the United Church. I indicated that I did not view intermarriage as being good or bad in and of itself, but rather a phenomenon worthy of study and understanding. I believe this was important for participants' sense of safety in the interview process.

To begin the first interview, participants were asked to describe their family histories with respect to their religious upbringing in order to uncover the complex interaction of individual backgrounds, expectations, and family histories, and how these factors contributed to the experience of being married to Jewish people. Early learning about marriage, religion, and culture were explored to uncover how these messages had impacted their own experience of being intermarried. Participants were then asked to share the story of their relationship with their spouse from the beginning of their relationship to the present.

My goal throughout the interview process was to elicit experiences from participants that *they* deemed to be most salient, rather than to impose my own presuppositions on them. I tried to come to an understanding of how the participants' level of commitment to their own religion had impacted their experiences of being intermarried. A list of sample interview questions is provided in Appendix E. Throughout the interviews, I used open-ended questions to obtain a full description of participants' experiences without leading them (Kvale, 1996). Further, I attempted to assume a "deliberate conscious naiveté" (p. 33) and was mindful of remaining open to new ideas. I listened actively, reflected, clarified, and paraphrased throughout the interview to elicit a detailed and clear description. I was conscious of subtle nuances throughout the interview, including the participants' body language, facial expressions, vocal tones, silences, and any moments of awkwardness. As Kvale suggested, I noticed both what was, and what was not discussed. In addition, I attended to my own reactions and recorded my thoughts in a journal following the interviews.

Once a participant's first interview was analyzed, I contacted him/her to arrange a second interview. As noted by Osborne (1990), "Successive data-gathering interviews create a re-spiraling effect and enable a more complete illumination of the phenomenon" (p. 84). The purpose of a second interview was

fourfold. First, because I was a stranger to participants prior to the first interview, the second interview was intended to provide participants with a second opportunity to share their experiences after having established a sense of comfort with me and the interview process. Second, the time between interviews was intended to allow participants to reflect on their intermarital experiences further, once they had been sensitized to the topic during the first interview. As such, during the second interview, participants were asked if any additional thoughts, ideas, recollections, or experiences had emerged for them since our first meeting. Third, the second interview served as a means of clarification of any ambiguities in the first interview and also provided me with a means of validating the first level of analysis. Finally, the second interview served to bridge the second order thematic cross-analysis, enabling me to question participants as to whether they shared similar experiences revealed by others during interviews (i.e. "Some people have mentioned X, has this been relevant for you in any way?").

During the latter portion of the second interview, I asked participants to describe their experiences of being interviewed and of sharing their intermarital stories. In so doing, I attempted to understand how the interview process may have impacted their descriptions. As Kvale (1983) noted, "The interviewer should be conscious of the interpersonal dynamics within the interaction and take it into account in the interview session and in the later analysis" (p. 178). I asked participants how the interview might have been different if their spouses had been present and also inquired how they felt about sharing their intermarital experiences with me, given the fact that I am Jewish and intermarried.

Interviews ended when participants indicated that they had shared all that was relevant to the topic. One participant contacted me via telephone following the second interview and related several issues that he realized he had missed

discussing during the interviews. His comments were documented in field notes for future analysis.

Data Analysis

Following the first interview, I wrote detailed field notes (Polkinghorne, 1989) describing the time and setting of the interview as well as my reactions and those of the participant. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and identifying data were altered to protect anonymity. Completed transcripts were reviewed simultaneously with the audio-taped interviews to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions.

A hierarchical thematic analysis procedure (Colaizzi, 1978) was used to extract the structure of the experience of being intermarried as perceived by participants. Using this method, thematic reduction is ultimately achieved through an on-going process of rigorous reflection and analysis of the narrative data. The researcher attempts to be aware of his or her own presuppositions and remains open to the many levels of meaning within the descriptions of experience. Through this hierarchical process of reduction, the researcher moves from the surface content of the narrative to deeper structures of meaning inherent within the descriptions (Giorgi, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989).

Following Colaizzi's (1978) method, an initial reading of each of the protocols was undertaken to obtain an impression of the meaning of each participant's experience. I noted initial themes as I read the protocol several times and reflected on the descriptions of experience. This is a period of immersion, where the researcher reads and reflects on the text to gain a sense of the whole and its parts. Through this process, statements within the protocol which were relevant to the phenomenon of intermarriage were identified as meaning units and these statements were paraphrased to reflect the basic meaning. One challenge during this process was differentiating intermarital issues related to culture and religion from those descriptions related to general marital dynamics.

Each selected meaning unit was given a theme label that corresponded with its essential meaning (Appendix F). A critical feature of this stage of phenomenological thematic analysis is the necessity of reading beyond the surface structure of statements to capture the deeper meaning, rather than solely the content (Kvale, 1996). It is imperative that the meaning legitimately comes from the data themselves. This required that I be keenly aware of my presuppositions and that I attempt to limit their influence on the meaning extracted.

During the analysis of each participant's first interview, I noted recurrent and divergent themes between participants. I also documented any ambiguities in the interviews and used these notes to develop relevant questions for the second interview. Following the completion of individual analyses, a cross-analysis of the entire data set was conducted. The result of this meaning analysis was a second-order cluster of five themes reflecting the common experiences across participants. Participants received summaries of the analysis and were asked for their reactions to the material. The feedback provided was detailed in field notes and incorporated into the final analysis.

Reliability and Validity

Qualitative methodology is rooted in philosophical foundations emphasizing perspectival, co-constituted, and contextual meaning (Colaizzi, 1978). As such, the meaning of reliability and validity in qualitative research differs from that in the quantitative, natural science paradigm. Reliability in phenomenological research relates to the uncovering of unified meaning amidst variable facts (Giorgi, 1994; Osborne, 1990). For example, a group of people encircling an elephant will describe the animal differently depending on their individual perspectives, however, the descriptions are all reflections of the elephant. In qualitative research, the method of "imaginative variation" encourages the researcher to see the phenomenon from different perspectives in order to come to a unified and

elegant description (Moustakas, 1994). In my research, the process of reflecting upon my own presuppositions helped me become more aware of my view of intermarriage, whereas engaging in imaginary variation encouraged me to see the phenomenon from different perspectives in order to arrive at a unified description.

Reliability is also established in phenomenological research through intersubjective agreement (Guba, 1981; Polkinghorne, 1989). Through close supervision during the data collection and analysis, and through cross-validation from colleagues and participants, the reliability of the interpretations was checked throughout the data analysis.

Validity, from a phenomenological perspective, relates to determining whether one has gained an accurate understanding of the phenomenon at hand. Phenomenological validity is determined by examining the description itself and by judging its ability to capture the phenomenon using language. Keen (1978) identified four key elements central to determining phenomenological validity, including vividness, accuracy, richness, and elegance. Vividness refers to the clarity and completeness of the description, whereas accuracy relates to the extent to which the description enables us to see ourselves in the human depictions. The description should be rich, capturing the breadth and depth of human experience, yet elegant in its ability to find order and simplicity amidst complexity.

Triangulation is the process of gathering data from a variety of sources to cross-check the validity of interpretations (Giorgi, 1994; Kvale, 1996). Osborne (1990) identified four means of assessing validity in phenomenological research including bracketing, goodness of fit, juridical validity, and empathic generalizability. Bracketing provides the reader with insight into the researcher's perspectives and into the means of data collection and analysis. I have attempted to make my method of data collection and analysis clear in this chapter and have outlined my presuppositions in both this chapter and in Chapter Five during my

discussion of the findings. In so doing I have attempted to leave an audit trail (Guba, 1981) for others to follow when judging the validity of the material.

Once the researcher has analyzed the data, "goodness of fit" between the analysis and the participants' experiences can be assessed by obtaining feedback from the participants. With this in mind, I conducted "self-corrective" validity checks (Kvale, 1996) during the second interview and following the completion of the entire analysis. Participants were provided with summaries of the second order analysis and were asked for their feedback. According to the comments provided, I refined aspects of the analysis in order to reflect as best I could the experiences of the participants themselves.

A third and critical means of assessing validity is through the juridical process (Osborne, 1990, Polkinghorne, 1989). It is incumbent upon the researcher to provide convincing arguments to support the analysis. Interpretations need to be grounded in the data themselves and can be strengthened using existing scholarly literature. Throughout this research process, I worked closely with the original data in order to ground my interpretations in the participants' lived experiences. I used existing literature to support the analysis and noted new and different aspects of the phenomenon that had not been articulated clearly in the literature.

Whereas quantitative research looks for statistical generalizability, qualitative studies aim for empathic generalizability (Guba, 1981; Osborne, 1990). The latter is achieved when the descriptions resonate for readers outside of the study who have experienced the same or similar phenomenon. I provided summaries of the analysis to colleagues, supervisors, and several social contacts who had intermarital experiences themselves in order to validate the analysis further. Employing these methods, was a means of addressing issues of the validity and reliability to establish and demonstrate the integrity of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Originally 23 first order themes were derived through the analysis of meaning units. These primary themes were further grouped into five second order themes: a) Marrying a Person, Not a Religion, b) Discovering That Marriage Is More Than You and Me, c) Learning the Ropes, d) Negotiating Through the Life Cycle, and e) Moving Along the Insider-Outsider Continuum. Table 1 (p. 77) depicts these five secondary themes and their respective primary subthemes. This chapter presents each of the 23 primary themes grouped into the context of the five second order themes. Direct excerpts of interview transcripts are included throughout the chapter to illuminate the themes in the participants' own words. Names, occupations, and identifying information have been altered to protect the anonymity of participants and their families.

Theme: Marrying a Person, Not a Religion

Participants met their spouses in educational, residential, employment, and organizational settings and were attracted to their unique personal qualities. Although the degree of participants' religious affiliations varied significantly, they all indicated that they fell in love with, committed to, and married a person, not a religion. Overall, they shared more commonalities with their partners than differences. Love, respect, and overall compatibility were deemed more important than religious or cultural homogeneity when making the decision to marry.

Cultural and religious differences were often experienced as interesting, attractive, or exotic, and an enriching opportunity to widen horizons. Most couples did not discuss in great detail how they would raise their children, handle possible

Table 1**Second Order Thematic Description of Participants' Experience of Intermarriage****Theme: Marrying a Person, Not a Religion**

1. We Are More Alike Than Different
2. Differences Are Attractive
3. We Can Overcome Challenges

Theme: Discovering That Marriage Is More Than You and Me

4. Parental Acceptance
5. Discovering Adversity: Us Against the World
6. Creating Family Boundaries

Theme: Learning The Ropes

7. Fish Out of Water
8. Bridging Cultural Differences
9. Confidence and Connection Through Study
10. Finding Common Ground
11. Learning Through Mentorship

Theme: Navigating Through the Life Cycle

12. The Wedding
13. Children and Religious Upbringing
 - Early decisions
 - Flexibility: Shifting gears midstream
 - Blended families
14. Death and Burial
15. To Convert or Not to Convert?
16. Tackling Traditions: Give and Take
 - Respect, acceptance, and compromise
 - Keeping kosher
 - Shabbat dinners
 - Synagogue and church attendance
 - Holidays
17. Finances: Commitment at What Price?

Theme: Moving Along the Insider-Outsider Continuum

18. Recognizing the Insider Connection
19. Stranger in the Midst
20. Generalized Identity and Restricted Access
21. Threat to Jewish Survival
22. Gaining Insider Status
23. The Minority Lens

family conflicts, or negotiate life cycle and holiday events prior to their marriages. Nonetheless, they believed they would be able to overcome future challenges due to religious or cultural differences.

We Are More Alike Than Different

Religion was but one facet of participants' marital relationships, and religious and cultural differences were not a focus on a day to day basis. Overall, marriages were defined by love, mutual interest, compatibility, and commitment, instead of religious or cultural differences. This held true even for those strongly observant in their respective religions. Participants who married at younger ages were particularly unconcerned about intermarital issues at the start of their relationships. Sue, a real estate agent in her 40's was raised in the United Church and moved away from organized religion as an adult. When she met David in her early 20's, she knew little about Judaism and had no concern about religious differences:

Judaism was just another religion, you know? I met my husband at university. . . and we had a lot in common and the things that we had in common kind of came first. It's like you don't go 'Hi I'm David--I'm Jewish' [laughing]. We were both interested in the same things. We were both . . . students. . . . So I never really even gave it a whole heck of a lot of thought.

Sue's connection with David was based on their mutual interests and attraction for one another. Despite seemingly contrasting backgrounds, she recognized a thread of commonality between their families:

The thing is. . . his grandfather had been a Hassidic rabbi but had come to Canada and was very idealistic and wanted to be a pioneer in Alberta. Really dumb thing to do, you know [laughing]? So in fact . . . my ancestors had been a pioneering family. So we had more in common as Canadians, specifically as Western Canadians than we had different in terms of religion.

Similarly, Richard, an engineer who described himself as a "lapsed Catholic", explained that his twenty-year marriage to his wife, Lynda, is based on their shared values. Like Sue, Richard knew little about Judaism initially and was unaware of

potential differences. Even when challenges related to religious identity and culture surfaced over the years, common interests, beliefs, and priorities were unifying forces that bridged religious differences:

When I married Lynda her Jewishness was as though she would have been Presbyterian or United or Italian. It was very interesting and intriguing, but no more. It didn't change the core person I married. It was just something about a person I married. . . . Our values, what we find interesting, what we find repulsive, what we find disgusting, what we find beautiful, we share all those things, and we're very lucky about that. Particularly about the values. Honesty, dedication to work, dedication to family. We're very close on those things. . . . and I suspect those things allowed both of us to forgive each other for not being of the other's religion. I suspect that our values were so close together that it made us far more accepting of each other in spite of the religious differences.

In contrast to Richard and Sue, Paul, an observant Anglican, was very familiar with Jewish customs when he met Rita in his early 40's. Having grown up in Ontario with Jewish people, Paul felt: "I guess I was kind of prepared. I knew Jewish people and I'd get invited into their homes, to weddings, bar-mitzvahs*, and what not. So I was familiar with Jewish life". Paul had studied Greek and Hebrew in order to read the bible in its original languages and was intrigued when he read Rita's personal advertisement in the newspaper:

She advertised herself as a "Jewish atheist". . . . and having had a little bit of experience with Israelis. . . I thought 'she's got to be Israeli and know Hebrew' so I sent her a letter asking if we could meet and explained that her atheism didn't sound too good since I considered myself religious. But I thought it would be interesting for us to meet anyway because I wanted to study Hebrew and I thought she could help me.

Rita and Paul met somewhat apprehensively at first, wondering if their contrasting religious beliefs would be a 'non-starter'. Upon meeting, however, they discovered that they were "otherwise ideally matched" and three years later, they married.

Raised as an Anglican in England, Bessie was raised to believe "People are the same" if they "Do unto others as they would do unto themselves". Having grown up with Jewish people in England, she was also familiar with some Jewish traditions. When Bessie moved to Canada and met Jack, she found herself

attracted to his interests in sports, music, and the theater. With both their families living out of the city during their courtship, Bessie and Paul had few outside responsibilities. Jack talked little about being Jewish during their courtship, and when he did, he emphasized the need for Judaism to progress with modern times. When Bessie began her relationship, she believed "Religion wasn't an issue. . . . There wasn't anything different than just being two people".

Christine, a devout Catholic physician in her 40's and mother of three had been divorced for over a decade when she met her husband, Sam, an observant Reform Jew. Both Christine and Sam had previously been married to people of their own faiths. Despite her devotion to the Catholic church, Christine's first marital experience clarified her priority in choosing a compatible mate, as opposed to focusing on religious affiliation:

We each had absolutely tragic first marriages. . . . I had been married to a man who was a cad [laughing]. . . . He was a womanizer, never paid a penny of support. . . . The guy was just a jerk [laughing]! . . . I was just not prepared to marry anybody. Through the years you have lots of possibilities, but [my children] were my highest priority. . . . I . . . had really not thought about remarrying. . . . Unless it was with someone quite ideal I wasn't going to get involved. . . . But when I met him he was just so extraordinary. . . . Every time he opens up his mouth he makes sense. And he's so steady and decent and bright. . . . He's the smartest person I've ever met. . . . We knew right away we . . . were meant for each other [giggling and smiling]. . . . It doesn't take that long when you're quite mature and you find someone you think is really fine. . . . I thought he'd never ask me to marry him!

Despite their differing backgrounds and religious affiliations, all participants focused on the core values, interests, and qualities of their spouses. Religious and cultural differences were not of primary concern, particularly at the start of their relationships. As we will see, religious and cultural issues became more important for some couples later on in their marital life cycles.

Differences Are Attractive

Although participants shared more similarities with their partners than differences, some articulated that religious or cultural diversity was a source of intrigue, interest, and attraction for them. Christine's husband, Sam, had lived in Philadelphia for many years prior to their meeting. Sam's unique qualities connected to his Jewish background were one source of Christine's attraction to him:

I've always been attracted to people from other countries. . . . As a little kid, I would drag home every new little kid who just came to Canada because I liked people who were a little bit different, who had some different experiences from mainstream. It's probably just a personality trait. I've done a lot of immigration work and sponsored a lot of refugees and I like to travel. Sam seemed. . . different. . . . He has a really, if you've ever heard him speak, he has this flat monotone sort of nasal [laughter boldly] way of speaking. . . [giggling]. . . I thought he was neat. I thought a Jewish person from Philadelphia was somehow exotic you know [laughing]. . . . He has this really neat sense of humor.

Similarly, when Sue met her husband, David, she was fascinated to discover that he had served in the Israeli army prior to their courtship. She found herself attracted to David's intense commitment to his Zionist beliefs: "I thought that was terrifically exciting because it was so idealistic. . . It was really wonderful".

Differences were often a source of fun and "spice" in the marriages. In several cases, participants indicated that their partners teased them about being Gentile in a loving way. Trent, a businessman in his late 40's, had been divorced when he met Marnie, a Jewess who was not strongly observant in her faith. Still newlyweds, Trent and Marnie had been married for two months after having lived together for several years. A member of the United Church, Trent chuckled when mentioning that periodically Marnie refers to him as her "goy* boy". Similarly, Christine laughed when describing how she and her husband refer to some of her cooking as "goy food". These playful references were sources of fun and expressions of affection.

In some cases, differences provided enriching opportunities for personal growth and learning. Richard, an engineer, was introduced to Lynda's Jewish family and community during their courtship. He quickly recognized their appreciation for education and the finer things in life, including culture and the arts, which had not been a focus in his family of origin. This was a source of intrigue for Richard, and he reflected that his life has been culturally enriched through his connection with his wife and her Jewish community:

I would say that [had I not intermarried] I would certainly be a little rougher around the edges than I am now. My father was an electrician, my mother was a housewife and we were not a particularly genteel Gentile family. So, the exposure to Lynda--for example, I never used chopsticks until I met Lynda. Um, now some would think that's a generalization [about Jewish people] but that's just an observation. I don't think I ate in a restaurant twice in a year until I met Lynda. I hadn't been to the theater until I met Lynda. And so, I guess I was lucky because I was able to recognize the real good stuff, about how I was being enculturated into a cultured community.

Sue also recognized that her horizons were widened as a consequence of intermarrying. Not only has she learned a great deal about Jewish religion and culture, but also, her life has been enriched by her connection with Jewish friends who share her love for the arts:

I feel like in some ways my life has been culturally enriched. I really think that's been a benefit to me. I've learned a lot about something that I otherwise would know nothing about and my friends are surprisingly enough--this is going to sound weird, but a lot of the [Jewish] ladies who are my friends now, they feel more like soul mates to me spiritually than some of the people that I grew up with in the sense that we like the same things. You know, we enjoy the art galleries and the symphonies and the theater. . . . My [old] friends weren't that interested in some of those things. . . . So I found that I gained a lot because. . . if I had married somebody who was . . . from my hometown I'm sure going to the hockey game would become the big thing to do on Saturday night.

These participants felt they gained a great deal culturally and enjoyed being part of an educated community that shared many of their own interests.

We Can Overcome Challenges

Most participants were not overly concerned about religious or cultural differences at the start of their marriages. Few discussed in great detail how they might handle potential challenges within themselves, their families, or communities prior to their marriages. When religious or cultural dissonance arose, most couples perceived the conflicts as being challenges that could be overcome, as opposed to weaknesses endemic to their relationships.

When Dan, a 29 year old lawyer, met his partner Farrah in high school, she was a non-practicing Jewess. Dan had been raised in a close Mormon community and felt great pressure from his family to marry within his faith. Farrah ultimately converted to Mormonism for a brief period after his family strongly encouraged her to join their faith. Less than a year after her conversion, however, Farrah and Dan both recognized that Mormonism was not the religious path for either of them, and they both chose to leave the church. After marrying and living a secular life for eight years, Farrah became reconnected to her Jewish roots when she attended a family bar-mitzvah. Despite her renewed commitment to Judaism, Dan's devotion to Farrah remained a priority over religious homogeneity:

I think by that time I had learned that it doesn't matter what the religious beliefs are. That didn't matter to me. . . . The part that mattered to me was that I loved her very much and that was more important to me than anything. And if she had different religious beliefs than me. . . that wouldn't stop me from loving her any more or less.

In retrospect, Richard recognized that he and Lynda were unaware of some of the potential challenges they would face when they married 20 years ago. Firmly believing in equality and acceptance of others, they perceived intermarriage as being an issue for their parents, a product of an earlier generation, as opposed to being an obstacle for themselves:

We weren't mature enough [to consider interfaith issues seriously before we married]. We were in the 70's. . . . For us it didn't make any difference. We were raised in an age when in school and university you're taught everyone

is equal and genders are equal and this stuff doesn't make any difference. We knew that . . . our parents weren't raised. . . in that way of thinking and therefore, where it was easy enough for us to decide to get married, we recognized that it might be really hard for our families to understand.

In contrast to Richard, who married in his mid twenties, Paul was in his forties when he met and fell in love with Rita. Having experienced a failed marriage prior to meeting Rita, Paul was not unaware of potential marital challenges. As a devout Anglican who attends church weekly, Paul recognized from the start that he and Rita, an atheist Jewess, would need to negotiate their religious differences. He felt that this was possible, since he shares many commonalities with Rita and because Jewish tradition is "the bedrock of Christianity". Interestingly, Paul views his intermarriage as a unique opportunity to deepen his practice of Christ's teachings:

You have to realize of all the writers of the Christian New Testament they're all Jewish except for one, being Luke. One of the things I was interested in is that Jesus. . . lived in a Jewish environment. So with Rita I saw this as an ideal way of recreating a bit of the traditions in which Jesus grew up in. That's actually one of the reasons why I want Rita to light Shabbat* candles for me because this had to be one of the things that Jesus did.

Despite the fact that Paul's and Rita's backgrounds differ as does the degree of their observances, Paul felt that any challenges they faced could be surmounted. He echoed the sentiments of most participants when he reflected "Our marriage doesn't stand or fall on the fact that we're intermarried."

Theme: Discovering That Marriage Is More Than You and Me

Participants described both positive and negative reactions to their relationships by their family, friends, and communities. Support for and resistance to their marriages came from both Jewish and Gentile family and friends. Family influences were often less significant for those whose parents had died and for those whose families lived far away in other provinces or countries. Some participants were more affected than others by the negative reactions, depending

on their personalities, ages, relationships with their families and spouses, and their need for external support and approval.

Parental Acceptance

In many cases, parents and in-laws demonstrated their support to couples. Sue's Jewish in-laws, for example, were accustomed to intermarriage within their family because their other children had previously married non-Jewish people. Sue appreciated the warm support she received from David's Jewish parents 25 years ago, recognizing in retrospect that it was not uncommon for Jewish parents of their generation to disown their intermarried children:

I realize I was very lucky because David's parents coming from a more orthodox background it could've sort of been "What! Our son's dead!" . . . I didn't even know at the time that could be an issue. It never even occurred to me.

Despite being grateful for the support she received, Sue was secure that her husband, an independent person, didn't need parental approval when he married her: "I suspect that they knew that it wouldn't make any difference [if they disapproved of the marriage], that if they had forced the issue they might not have been invited [to the wedding]". Echoing Sue's sentiments, Trent indicated that although his Jewish in-laws have always been supportive, his wife's decision to marry was hers and not her parents'. He believed that a negative reaction from Marnie's parents would not have threatened his relationship with her, but instead would have resulted in a strained relationship between his wife and her parents: "If they were really upset and against it, there would have been a problem probably between them, but not with me".

Paul believed that his deceased father would likely have struggled with his intermarrying and was relieved that he did not need to deal with this potential disapproval. Paul's Anglican mother, however, accepted his marriage, recognizing that he and Rita were a "good match" for one another. His mother's

familiarity with Jewish customs through a previous friendship with a Jewish family expedited her acceptance of the relationship:

[My mother] actually grew up with probably the only Jewish family in all of rural Ontario right next door to her. My grandfather ran a stable. . . and the Jewish family ran the only store in this town. She had a Jewish girlfriend so she knew all about gefilte fish* and Hanukkah* and things like that. Of course the Jewish family was as poor as my mother's family was so she knew there's no Jewish conspiracy.

As we will see subsequently, in many cases, family and friends showed continual support to participants throughout their married lives, welcoming them and helping them navigate religious and cultural traditions. The acceptance and mentorship provided were highly valued and appreciated by participants. Those accepted by parents and in-laws felt both welcomed and relieved that they were not faced with a potential source of marital stress.

Discovering Adversity: Us Against the World

Most couples experienced some adverse reactions at some point during their relationships from either Jewish or non-Jewish people including parents, in-laws, clergy, friends, or community members. Some negative forces were incidental, whereas others were continuous or blatantly discriminatory. Participants tended to interpret the negative responses as being a reflection of the messengers, rather than of their marriages. In the process of dealing with negative reactions, most participants found that they became closer to their partners and often had a feeling of "us against the world". Whereas negative reactions subsided over time for most participants, others struggled with external challenges throughout their marriages. In one case, negative parental forces were destructive to the participant's marriage. Several participants described the negative reactions as being stressful, disillusioning, and indicated that it made them see the world in a different way.

Richard was accepted by his wife's Jewish family, however his Catholic parents struggled with the fact that he was intermarrying. His family had little contact with Jewish people prior to meeting Lynda and they had internalized negative stereotypical beliefs about Jewish people. Although Richard's father was not happy about the union, his mother's opposition to their intermarriage was stronger. Richard's love for and dedication to Lynda deepened as he watched her graciously cope with the opposition she faced:

My mother did not display noble characteristics. I mean we'd come in and sit at the kitchen table and she'd plunk down some tea and some biscuits and basically sort of steam around the kitchen a bit, which I ignored because I'd already made my decision. Lynda took it with a graciousness that I've never seen before and never seen since. I can't imagine turning the other cheek as many times as she did to that kind of behavior.

Ultimately, Richard felt he needed to make a choice between his mother and his wife if he was going to have a successful marriage. His decision to move to another city was motivated in part by his desire to protect his wife and his marriage:

I was really committed. . . This was going to be it. So. . . I didn't care [what my parents thought]. I had made my decision. For whatever reason I knew that a man's connection to his family, particularly to his mother, can be the ruination of a marriage. And I knew that I had to make a decision. It was either going to be Lynda or my mother. And I made my decision. I married her. And I took her 1000 miles away to a new city and that was my choice. Done. And I think the resolve I had then is what saved a lot of grief. Because I didn't have any qualms. I knew where my allegiances were. I knew I had decided to marry Lynda, and quite frankly I was prepared to disown my family. . . . I knew that a man particularly can't choose between his wife and his mother.

Richard made a decision to align with his wife and subsequently set a firm boundary around his relationship in order to protect it from negative external forces. Although Richard and Lynda's decision to get married was long-standing, they kept their engagement a secret from their respective families until three months prior to their wedding date to avoid an extended period of discouraging reactions from family members: "We felt that the longer people had to consider. . .

the more they might try to dissuade us. . . . We could last three months, but if we had to last a year they might have got to us."

Richard shed light on another protective mechanism in his relationship. At times he and Lynda did not disclose to each other negative comments made by others in order to protect one another from hurtful messages. Although Richard's Jewish in-laws were "extremely supportive", he recognized that Lynda had likely withheld from him any reservations they had about the marriage:

I was not privy to whatever fights and discussions, arguments. . . . If there was anything, I am today, and was then totally unaware of any conflict whatsoever. There must have been though. . . . I knew they wanted her to marry somebody Jewish. I knew there wasn't a rabbi [at the wedding]. . . . It went deeper than that because both of her sisters had married Jewish. Of all of Lynda's cousins, she's the only one [who intermarried]. . . . [But we] protected the other. . . . I know I did. There wasn't much for me to protect. My family is relatively small and not that close. Her family was large and very close, and I suspect now that there must have been some real scorchers, and I was kept from those.

Similarly, when college friends sparked fear in Richard when they warned him that marrying a Jewess might impede his career, he chose not to discuss the incident with Lynda. It was not until he shared the story during the interview that Richard realized he had withheld this information from Lynda in order to protect her:

I must admit there was a period of time when some of my friends began to say things like "Are you sure you know what you're doing?" . . . It was very [scary], oh very because I had no exposure. I'd only been going out with Lynda for less than a year, and her family received me with open arms. . . . but school classmates would say "Well you know, geez, she's Jewish and if you marry somebody Jewish, I don't know". . . . They were carrying the very old prejudices which had been handed down to them. . . . I kind of dismissed that, but there was a period of time when I got a little scared because people were saying this stuff and I was thinking 'Oh man. I've never had any experience with this thing. Is it right? . . . Maybe they're right'. It seemed silly. . . . and . . . it didn't make any logical sense It passed quickly. . . . This is interesting. I never thought about it before, but I was afraid it would hurt Lynda so I did not discuss this. She would not have known that.

Dan reflected on the difficult struggle he faced when he left the Mormon Church and married his wife, Farrah. Although Farrah's Jewish parents were

supportive of the marriage, Dan's family was devastated when he chose not to go on a Mormon mission* and backed away from his faith. His wife felt hurt when Dan's family blamed her for Dan's decision to leave the church. Like Richard, Dan aligned with his wife, however he struggled internally with the opposition he faced from his family:

It was horrible. . . . It was really bad. Now when I look back it was really bad, especially by the time I had decided that I didn't want to have anything to do with [Mormonism]. . . . I was struggling so much with the decisions and I think that was what brought me to it. [I thought] 'If I'm struggling this hard with [being Mormon], it's probably not right for me' and I think that's how I came to it. I can't even say for sure. After I decided that, the pressure changed from being directly on me [to Farrah] and it was a very hard time for me and my dad. . . . I think even to this day she's kind of blamed for it. . . . They did say that out loud. . . . There have been apologies since then, but I still think. . . my sister anyways [still feels that]. I don't know if my dad does still feel that.

Dan struggled to come to terms with his religious and marital choices when his sister reminded him that his deceased mother would have likely disapproved of his decisions: "It's something my sister has thrown at me and I resented that, really resented that because she would say 'What would mom think?' and I don't know, because she's not here." Over time, as Dan became more comfortable with his decisions, his family stopped pressuring him to reclaim his faith:

It was difficult at first, but not anymore. My family--I wouldn't say they've given up on me, but they don't put any pressure anymore because they know it won't do them any good. I'm comfortable with myself now. And I think they see that too.

Interestingly, as Dan became stronger with his own decisions, and the turmoil within himself calmed, the storm outside also subsided.

Bessie's Anglican family was supportive of her marital decision 25 years ago, however, her mother-in-law, who had immigrated to Canada from Russia, strongly opposed the intermarriage. On their very first face to face meeting, Bessie was horrified when her future mother-in-law tried to bribe her into canceling the

wedding. This was a shock for Bessie, because religion had not been a concern in her relationship with Jack:

[Religion] wasn't an issue, except for his mother who came to [visit] and offered me money to go back to England. . .when we were engaged. [She] offered me money to go home. . . . [She said] I couldn't marry her son because I was not Jewish. . . . She said it just wouldn't work because we weren't of the same religion. She had enough sorrow in her life and she would not be ostracized by the community. . . . I was sitting in the sun at Parliament Hill and it was a really hot day and actually we both got very sunburned. I couldn't believe this because there hadn't been any kind of issue, and then not to be accepted because you weren't a particular--Jewish. Which seemed to be absolutely absurd seeing he didn't practice his religion and had never brought this up as an issue. . . . He had told me before that his mother fits the picture of the stereotype of a Jewish mother with an only son, and she fit the picture very well. Actually it was really astounding that she would think of me as such a terrible person to get away from her son. . . . This kind of made me feel. . . not good enough, not good enough.

Bessie interpreted her mother-in-law's reaction as a personal rejection. Despite the fact that Bessie felt "devastated" by the incident, she was unable to seek comfort and support she needed from her fiancé, who interpreted the incident as being "funny". Looking back, Bessie wished that Jack had accompanied her on that first meeting. She wished that he had confidently proclaimed that she was his choice as a mate and that he would have requested that his mother properly welcome Bessie into the family.

When a work transfer required that they move, Bessie and Jack, newly married, found themselves living in the same city as Jack's parents. Parental influences, that had been dormant during their courtship, quickly became apparent. Although Jack's father was supportive to Bessie, he died soon after Bessie and Jack married. Unfortunately, the triangle between Bessie, her husband, and her mother-in-law persisted. Bessie felt that no matter how hard she tried to please her mother-in-law, "there was always something wrong " and she was never "good enough". In addition, Bessie felt that her husband did not align with her, but instead constantly tried to appease his mother:

When we would go to dinner and various things, he would side with his mother. . . . and then when I would say something later on [he'd say] "it's. . . just mom". . . . He would more or less side with her more to keep the peace. I think the dutiful son kind of thing. . . compromising and telling me not to worry about it afterwards.

Bessie's story illuminates the interaction between external and internal forces affecting a person's intermarital experiences. Jack underestimated the extent to which his mother's rejection had hurt Bessie. In turn, Bessie was unable to elicit the support she needed from her fiancé. Still in its early stage of development, their relationship boundary had been damaged. Left unrepaired, their relationship was vulnerable to external influences that continued to erode their marriage. Although Bessie entered her relationship believing that religious differences were inconsequential, in retrospect she came to feel that "religion is the biggest divider of people". Despite the fact that her and Jack's religious involvement was minimal, she believed that intermarriage was not advisable if interfering family members resided in close proximity.

Despite the fact that Christine had gone through what she described as a "tragic" first marital experience with a man of her own Catholic faith, Christine's mother was concerned when her daughter, a mature woman in her 40's, announced her plans to marry a Jewish man. Not only was her mother concerned that Christine might be prevented from practicing her Catholic faith, but she also wondered whether Sam might possess negative stereotypical Jewish qualities. Christine candidly acknowledged that stereotypical beliefs about Jewish people had been passed down from her maternal grandfather to her mother and finally to herself:

My mother of course was upset. She's just as Catholic as Killarney and would hope that I would marry a Catholic person because she couldn't imagine how you can carry on strongly in your own faith without a partner who's running the same road. She called and then tried to get my sister to campaign as well to make me think this over. . . . My [maternal] grandfather

was somewhat anti-Semitic actually. . . He had quite a few Jewish friends in fact, but he wouldn't ever do business with them and he would say something like "Once the deal suits them, there's no deal left for you". . . and people would sort of try to disguise their background from him in order to try to do business with him [laughing]! He was so convinced that you always came up short when you dealt with a Jewish person. He was terrible. So, I mean. . . my mother had picked up some of that. . . and of course, you know, I've heard the stories too, so I guess it's had a bit of impact. . . . So she was looking for Sam to be a bit cheap [laughing], you know. . . . and she said "He doesn't look Jewish [laughing]". You know, it was all of those sort of. . . stereotypical things. Sam goes to mass and he certainly supports me in terms of allowing me to make contributions to causes that I believe in. He's not cheap like that and she's crazy about him now. I mean she just thinks he's a prince, and he is.

Although this initial opposition might have been damaging to some, Christine was not thrown by the experience. As a mature woman, confident in her choices and supported by her partner, she coped with the initial familial resistance she faced with relative ease. Intermarriage, in her case, helped her family see Sam as an individual who did not fit a prejudicial generalization and helped debunk negative stereotypes that had been passed on to family members by previous generations.

When Sue became engaged, her parents, generally quiet people, kept their reservations to themselves. One incident around the time of her engagement, however, informed Sue that her mother was not completely comfortable with the intermarriage:

Someone asked "Is your daughter marrying somebody who is Jewish?" and my mother said "I don't know. You have to ask him". She wasn't about to tell him anything! And I thought 'Well, why wouldn't you say one way or the other?'. . . I was surprised that she didn't just say "yes". Like what difference does it make? But it was an issue for her in that town.

Sue didn't pay much attention to this incident, and shortly after she and David married, they moved back to her beautiful, quiet, hometown with dreams of settling down and building their future together. Much to Sue's horror and dismay, her husband quickly became the target of anti-Semitism by the community she had grown to love and trust. This painful experience proved to be disillusioning for Sue, making her question her historical roots:

The town I grew up in, I came to realize after I was married, is actually a very anti-Semitic little town, you know, but it's almost like if there's nobody there to trigger it, it doesn't happen. After we were married for a year, we moved there and we lived there for a time, and my husband, my poor husband was a lightening rod for all sorts of horrible things. . . . He got into an argument in the local press with a pastor. . . who had blithely written something about the Jews killing Christ and David had sort of written back and said "let's get this all sorted out" and it started this whole thing, you know and he lost his job over it. He was told that he was too different. . . . It sort of changed my perspective of my whole upbringing. It's almost like. . . I saw the town suddenly as it would've been through my husband's eyes as opposed to mine because all these people who had always been so nice to me, people who I just thought the world of--I mean the one guy that laid our carpet in our house asked my husband "Well would you like to come, we have this little club? We watch these movies and we do this and we do that" and my husband said, "Like what kind of movies?" and it was "Did 6 million really die?" kind of movies! I mean, these guys were neo-Nazis for God's sake! I mean, what? This little man, this fellow who I have known for all my life, who has never been a horrible person, and suddenly--you don't want to know him anymore. So it changed how I saw things. Like I saw my own little town as being a not very nice place and it's taken a lot of time to kind of get that back into perspective. For a long time I didn't even want to know any of the people there anymore.

Although her husband was not all that surprised by the situation, Sue felt devastated when her parents were unable to openly acknowledge the discrimination. Sue battled with feelings of guilt, shame, and disappointment and felt that she needed to choose between her loyalties to her husband, to her family, and to her community. Sue pulled away emotionally and physically from her family and community, and she and David moved to Edmonton. Fortunately, David and his family were extremely supportive to Sue, and the experience strengthened her commitment to her husband. At the same time, she struggled with a loss of idealism and felt "isolated" and "cut off" from her historical roots. Years later, Sue was comforted when she learned that her mother had tried to stand by her in her own way:

She had been a member of the United Church there for years and years. She played the piano for them, she taught Sunday school, she did the usual type of stuff. And whenever someone's daughter would get married there would always be a big shower in the church, right? So when our wedding

was announced--and it never even occurred to me [back then]--my mother told me this years later--they never offered, you see, to hold a shower for me. And she stopped going to church over it. Now, it never even connected in my head. . . . but it actually caused her to sever her relationship with the church that she had always been a member of because she was very hurt that they treated me differently because of who I was marrying. So that was her solidarity with me.

Sue's story again sheds light on the interplay between both internal and external forces that shape intermarital experiences and their meaning. For Sue, the discrimination that she and David faced ultimately strengthened her commitment to her husband, but at the same time it altered her sense of identity and her relationship with the family and community that she had always loved, respected, and trusted.

Creating Family Boundaries

Several participants recognized the importance of the family for Jewish people. Although some enjoyed the closeness of their partners' Jewish families, others found the connection stifling at times. Richard felt a need to obtain physical and emotional distance from Lynda's family in order to feel comfortable:

Her whole family, including her brothers and her mother and all her uncles and aunts and the whole shmeat [group, family], were living in Ontario. I can tell you this. . . [pause] not only are the nuclear [Jewish] families incredibly close, at least in my observance. . . . [but] the extended family is very close and I'll use the word smothering. When I went to assess where our future was I had the foresight even though a relatively young man then that I, as a person, who had not been brought up in a close nuclear family or within a smothering extended family, could not survive that. I just knew that. And so, I told Lynda, well, we're going to move. We're going to have a new life. . . . So that was a bit of a sting I think for Lynda. But she respected it. So we got over the first big hurdle which would have been being sucked into the vortex of the family. Those are strong words, but. . . in my estimation strong words are necessary from my point of view to convey that.

For Richard, establishing a comfortable boundary between his relationship with his wife and her family was essential and non-negotiable.

In Jewish endogamous marriages there is often the expectation and hope that marriage between a bride and groom will also mean a marriage between the

two families. Several participants indicated that their respective families did not join as "one big family" after they married. For some, this was partially due to the fact that parents had died or families lived far distances from one another. In several cases, however, participants like Sue, recognized that their families were culturally very different from one another:

[Our parents] got along very well. Very cordially. Very different people, you know really different people. But I think they made the effort to be nice to one another and they were fine. David's mom still comes often if we are going to my parents' place on a holiday and she doesn't have anywhere to go. We take her with us and she's always welcome, at my parents place.

Dan indicated that his and Farrah's families don't get together often and when they do, they do their best to get along:

About the only time [cultural differences] would come up is when our families get together and that doesn't happen very often. While my family disagrees with me about not practicing Mormonism they . . . don't condemn anybody else for their own beliefs. . . . When our families get together there's no talk of religion or anything like that.

Although Richard was relieved that his parents managed to get along in a cordial fashion, he knew that the family would never be particularly close. A geographical move to another city was Richard's attempt to reduce any friction resulting from cultural dissonance:

We knew we were moving. We knew we were going to be living in another city and we knew at best it would have to be some sort of family occasion to bring the families together but that the families would never be blended. So that's fine and that's how it's worked out. The families are separate. . . . That was not in cards and our move to Edmonton was in a large measure motivated by that. We knew we were going to get married and we were going to leave and they could just go on with their respective lives.

The fact that their families had not joined did not appear to be distressing to participants. Rather, they were satisfied and relieved when their families got along cordially and avoided tension.

Theme: Learning The Ropes

Most participants were unfamiliar with Jewish holidays and rituals prior to their intermarriages. Many described feeling somewhat awkward as they were introduced to Jewish traditions. Several described feeling like 'fish out of water' and were concerned that they might inadvertently blunder, thereby offending others and embarrassing themselves. In addition to religious rituals, some participants needed time to adjust to unfamiliar cultural norms, including various behaviors, family communication styles, and boundaries.

Over time, participants found a variety of ways to learn about Judaism through reading, enrolling in courses, participating in Jewish traditions, drawing on similarities in their own religious traditions, and asking questions. Often spouses, Jewish family, and friends served as mentors, answering participants' questions and providing them with guidance. Over time, participants became increasingly comfortable with Jewish traditions and more tolerant of themselves when they periodically felt awkward.

Fish Out of Water

Although all participants indicated that they found Jewish rituals to be both intriguing and enriching, those who were unfamiliar with Jewish traditions shared Richard's early experiences of feeling overwhelmed, worrying that they would inadvertently blunder and disrespect Jewish religious practices:

It was uncomfortable [during my first Passover seders] because I was afraid I was going to do something wrong. It's the same as the dietary [customs]. . . . I just didn't want to do something wrong and insult everybody. And the rules can be quite complex. . . . So there's the constant fear that you are going to do something wrong. The fear is exacerbated by the fact that it's not just. . . a matter of etiquette you are going to breach. You are going to breach the religion. It's a lot of pressure. . . . So when you come into a formal celebration in the home you worry that your mistake will be like a horrible, horrible mistake.

Other participants indicated that their Gentile family members initially worried that they might err or be offensive in some way. Paul's mother, for example, was initially apprehensive about serving ham at a Christmas dinner, wondering if this non-kosher* food would offend his wife. Some participants indicated that they needed to adjust to the elaborate and often lengthy Jewish religious rituals, such as the Passover seder, that takes place in the home:

In other religions, the service or the religious observance in the home is usually simply grace before the meal. . . . That's the sum total of the religion in the house. To sit through what is akin to a service that you would [normally] go out to. . . is very unusual. . . . That took some getting used to because it seemed like an awful lot. It could go on for all evening. . . . I'm used to it now but I know that was one of the things that was [different] because it seems so religious, it seems so like 'wow you're going through all this trouble to do this at your home'. That's strange. The fact that you'd cover your head in your home. Like I mean you save that for when you go to your place of worship. You do the rituals at your place of worship not in your home.

Synagogue services were particularly daunting for most participants initially, given the language barrier and the requirement for male participants to wear a prayer cap called a yarmulke* to cover their heads. Although Trent wears a yarmulke in synagogue as a sign of respect, doing so often makes him feel like an "intruder":

It feels strange to wear something on your head like that for starters. I think the part that probably feels strange is. . . this invasion thought. I come into your synagogue and I'm participating in something that is yours. . . . The feeling [is] that you're being a bit intrusive.

Unlike Trent, who has recently been introduced to Jewish rituals, Richard has grown accustomed to these traditions through experience over the course of two decades. He recalled, however, that he was not always so comfortable. Wearing a yarmulke initially felt sinful to Richard, because his Catholic upbringing had always taught him to remove any head coverings in religious settings:

[At first I felt like a] blasphemous sinner by covering my head in a religious service. . . . Because we're told men do not cover their heads in a Christian service. So it's a shock. . . . In every other religion you do not cover your head. The Pope and the Cardinals are the only ones who cover their heads. . . . That was the toughest one to adjust to--that in the presence of the Lord, you covered your head.

Although Richard considered himself to be a lapsed Catholic, previous religious experiences had impacted his reaction to new traditions.

Several participants also described feeling cut-off by the language barrier during synagogue services, where Hebrew and Aramaic are often spoken. Some participants felt like foreigners in a strange land and worried that their ignorance and inability to follow the services would be detected by the native Jewish congregants. Sue described that she was relieved to learn that many Jewish people do not understand the ancient texts themselves. This knowledge served to reduce her feeling of being an outsider:

Sometimes it feels strange when you go to something and you don't understand, at least initially it did. I assumed that everybody read Hebrew and that everybody understood what was going on and the first few times that I went to things like bar-mitzvahs or whatever and you can't sing and you just can't keep track of the service at all really. I felt kind of weird but then I kind of realized too that half the people who were there seemingly don't read what's going on either or they are reading in English. So, at first I thought everybody else will see it, that I can't tell [what's going on]. Like page what [laughing]? I don't know what we're doing here!

In contrast, Paul was at a great advantage when attending synagogue services, having studied Hebrew formally and having been exposed to the language through his Hebrew-speaking wife. Even so, Paul commented that he found the Reform synagogue services much easier to follow because the rabbi used Sephardic* pronunciation that he had learned, as opposed to the Ashkenazi* pronunciation, often used in more orthodox synagogues.

Several participants were initially surprised by the differing cultural norms evident in synagogue. In contrast to the decorum in her church,

Christine was unaccustomed to the chattering by congregants during synagogue services:

Sometimes I'm a little bit scandalized by the lack of spirituality? Like, the way they talk during synagogue instead of praying? . . . making business deals, you know? It's just different from, you know, being in church where everybody is attentive sort of or praying or quiet, not sort of chattering.

Others needed to get used to the idea of people attending lengthy synagogue services late and allowing their children to move around freely during services:

In the ones that I have been in, they appear to run synagogues very loosely. . . . It seems like a fairly loose group. I mean sometimes there were kids running around. . . . The other thing that kind of surprised me is that, as I understand, on a Saturday morning in the Synagogue you can go there say at 9 o'clock and leave at 1:00. In other words it can be very very long if you want to stay there for the whole time. So Marnie tells me she'd go in sometimes and stay for the part she wanted, and then she'd leave. That seems kind of strange to me, but okay.

Several participants were concerned that they would inadvertently embarrass themselves due to their lack of knowledge and experience. After being married for many years, Richard reflected that part of 'learning the ropes' is recognizing over time which questions to ask:

I'm cognizant of where I have to be careful, but I will ask. Now I've been around long enough to ask. Like I'll ask if I want to stir something with a piece of cutlery--I'll see which is the meat and which is the dairy pot. I know enough now, but [at first] there are so many rules that anybody going into that would be kind of shit scared. . . . You'd have no clue, you would have no clue. You'd go in there and your head is just going shoo shoo.

Over time, several participants like Richard described their gradual sense of becoming comfortable with Jewish ritual, and their ability to see the humor in awkward moments:

At the seder I always get the passage out of the service [that includes] the rabbis' names--and I can never pronounce them [laughing] and I don't know how that happens! You go around read a portion, read a portion, read a portion. . . . It'll go around the table randomly three times [and] I always get the rabbis and of course I've never heard them as a kid. . .

[names like rabbi] "Elazar". . . . That always happens every year that's really quite amusing. . . . I butcher all the names every year.

Similarly, Christine laughed freely as she described the ironies of grappling with traditional Jewish cooking and dietary kosher laws: "What do you know as a Catholic girl about kosher in a kitchen [laughing]? I mean who ever heard of such thing? You wash the dishes twice? [laughing] OK, I'll do it! They were clean to start with!" Over time, the initial fear of the unknown was transformed into an increased level of understanding and self-acceptance. Laughing at the irony of their circumstances often put challenging situations into perspective.

Bridging Cultural Differences

Some participants described a process of adjustment with respect to cultural differences between their own and their partners' families. Over time, some participants discovered that Jewish cultural norms around communication, physical touch, and boundaries, were different from those of their families of origin. For some, these differences were 'welcomed with open arms', both literally and figuratively. Sue, for instance, enjoyed the closeness of her husband's family and their overt demonstration of affection through physical touch. This was unusual for Sue, because her family of origin was not physically demonstrative. She noticed that over time, she came to express her affection more overtly. In turn, Sue recognized that her family of origin has gradually responded by becoming more physically affectionate in return:

My family is very very non-physical. I've become very physical over time and my parents have responded by becoming more physical with me. I get hugged when I go home now--I never did as a younger person. It wasn't part of who my family was. . . . I mean with his mom, it's like if you meet her and if you didn't give her a hug and a kiss I mean it's "what's the matter with you?", right? There's a lot of physical--a lot of touching and patting and . . . my family was very WASP, I mean very. You know, sit at the table quietly and "good-bye I'm going off to war now". "Don't smash the car on the way out" [laughing]. So I changed a lot and they've actually kind of responded and they like that too.

Several participants commented about their need to become accustomed to the high energy level and intensity of Jewish gatherings. Over time, Richard learned to decode Jewish cultural expressions and mannerisms and eventually became more accustomed to boisterous family gatherings:

The energy and noise at a family gathering was incredible. The first few times I was like--I'm sure if you took . . . a dog . . . to a rock concert, the dog would just like sit on the floor and not move. Well the first couple of times we went to something that was particularly raucous I felt like that dog sitting on the floor. I just couldn't move, I didn't know what the hell--it was incredible. . . . I just wasn't used to this kind of energy level and everybody is loud and talking. It's just amazing so it took some getting used to. . . . After a while you begin to sort of realize that. . . certain mannerisms and expressions are almost defense mechanisms. Like, if somebody says "ah, feh!" to end a conversation, it's almost to get out of the fact that it's roaring along. You got to break it up somehow. So that was profound. . . I was in awe for the longest time. I was dumbfounded for the longest time. That was just amazing.

Although Sue benefited from physical communication offered by her husband's family, at times, she found the intensity of her husband's verbal communication to be overwhelming. Sue found it extremely stressful for example, when David's inclination to make his opinions apparent collided with her family's tendency to "keep the peace":

I can remember just vibrating from just little things that happened when we were first married. I mean David yelling at his mother, "we don't want any eggs!" [His mother had said] "I just bought you a dozen eggs because I was at the store and I got extra and here you go" and he's going "We don't need them!" I'm like "Don't argue with her, just take them". He goes, "No!" Total fight over the stinking eggs. . . . and it's nothing, because tomorrow everything is fine. I was "Don't do that, don't argue with your parents" because. . . I was raised that you didn't argue with your parents. . . . That's something that drives David wild is that. . . everybody gets together and makes nice, nice. . . . He would rather that they all yell at one another and just kind of have it out and get it off their chest. . . . [When] were just newly married. . . and my parents were visiting. . . . David and his parents got into this [political] argument . . . and my mother burst into tears and said "How can you talk to each other like that?" and David said "it's a political discussion". . . And she was really upset, she was crying she left the room and it was very, very upsetting to her because she likes things to be nice, you know? And you don't talk about certain things--certainly not if it's going to cause an argument. Over the years, David and my family have reached some sort of an

agreement about that [and] David now doesn't bring up things that he knows are going to [cause]. . . . heated discussions. . . . I'm really grateful. I found those very trying. [I felt] pulled to pieces.

Sue's adjustment to these cultural differences was ultimately facilitated by time, experience, and her husband's willingness to soften his communication style. Similarly, others commented that time and experience resolved much of the earlier dissonance they experienced. In contrast to most participants, Paul felt a high comfort level with Jewish life right from the start of his marriage. He attributed this to his extensive exposure to Jewish people growing up in Ontario. Threading through all these stories, is an awareness that experience and exposure served to bridge cultural differences.

Confidence and Connection Through Study

Participants found different means of learning about Jewish religion, culture, and traditions. Over time, several participants became more comfortable with Jewish ritual through reading, taking Judaica classes, or studying Hebrew. Christine found her study of Judaism to be both informative and enriching:

I really admire Jewish ethics. Like the hierarchy of love or of giving. That's just sublime. Really inspiring. You know I really very much enjoy the Jewish studies. The adult education that we go to sometimes. They're always really intellectually stimulating. Judaism is a really, you know, an intellectual religion.

Two participants studied the Hebrew language in order to read the bible in the original form, follow religious services, or connect with their family. As Paul explained "My Hebrew wasn't as good [at first] so [the synagogue service] wasn't as interesting as it is now to me". Richard recounted how a crash course on reading Hebrew impressed his daughter who attends parochial school:

I took "Hebrew in a Day" from the Rabbi, which is actually quite good because the alphabet is so small and the rules are so constant that at the end of the day I went home and read a story to my daughter in Hebrew. I

didn't know what I was reading, but I could read it. She was astounded. I sat, and slowly but surely I read a whole page.

Whether the learning was extended or periodic, most participants were able to meet their differing needs for knowledge, connection, communication, and understanding. In contrast, as a newlywed, Trent was beginning to realize that his lack of knowledge was impeding his understanding of Jewish rituals as well as his ability to fully support his wife in her practice:

I think that's going to be important. . . . for me to feel comfortable and for me to play a role and the fact that she's Jewish. I'll just use an example and I can't remember the ceremony they go through where they light the candles, not for Sabbath. It's the one where they've got eight candles. Is that at Hanukkah? It was either that or Passover and I can't remember which. You go through that ceremony and you want to understand it because of course it comes with a chant and a song. . . . You can sit there and listen, but you have no idea unless you can sort of pick up the drift of what's going on, it doesn't mean much. It means nothing to me, and I can't share any part of the ceremony with her if I don't understand any of it. So from my perspective it means that I've got to learn some of this stuff somehow.

For some participants, formal study was a source of personal enrichment, increased confidence, and empowerment. Others learned more informally through reading. Knowledge through study served to bond couples and families more closely.

Finding Common Ground

Although several participants indicated that they often did not share the same emotional connection to Judaism as did their spouses, they endeavored to relate to Jewish ritual by finding similarities in their own religions. Dan, for example, discovered links between Mormon practices he had grown up with and Jewish rituals he was beginning to adopt:

For me [the Sabbath prayers] were different and I think I kind of associated it with the way we would always say a blessing before a meal even though it is a little different. . . . So I could kind of relate it to how I was brought up but in a different way. You see, in the Mormon religion on Sundays they do what's called 'sacrament', which is a blessing on

bread. The bread is passed to everyone in the congregation and the blessing on water. . . which is supposed to be. . . a symbol of the wine. So in that case it's similar to some of the blessings that are done for Shabbat.

Similarly, Richard and Trent both recognized a common thread running through all religious services:

The stunning thing. . . for me was that all organized religions, the services other than the parts that I can't understand, are all identical. There's a prayer for the country. There's responsive prayers for the government, for our leaders, for our country, for freedom, for peace. Every religion has those, so when I went to my first service. . . the service is all the same. There's a clergy member at the front. There's a recitation of a service, which is rote. There's a responsive part. There's a story to be told somewhere in the middle and there's announcements at the end. And then we'll have a tea or a raffle or whatever. Really there really isn't a big difference.

Paul's recognition that Judaism is the bedrock of his Anglican traditions effectively paved the way for the discovery of commonalities between the two faiths: "In Romans, Paul himself is Jewish and writing to a Gentile audience said that . . . Gentile followers should respect Judaism because it is the original faith, the bedrock of Christianity". Finding similarities between Judaism and their own religions helped participants find a common ground with Jewish traditions. This served to bridge differences and reduce the foreign feeling that novel traditions can elicit.

Learning Through Mentorship

Several participants commented that Jewish family and friends were extremely supportive throughout their marriages, answering their questions regarding Jewish customs in a respectful and nonthreatening manner. In some cases, family and friends acted as teachers, mentors, and coaches, helping them learn the ropes of Jewish traditions. This was particularly helpful for some participants when their Jewish partners were unable to answer specific questions about the meaning of particular Jewish traditions:

Her mother. . . was very observant and certainly taught me everything I know about kashrut. . . . If I have a question about kashrut or anything I'll phone her, and her brother, who is quite orthodox, so he really knows everything. . . . Her mother was very accepting of me, explained the protocol of meals, no cheeseburgers and no milk with your meat and so on. Very nicely, just matter of factly. Just "this is the way we do it".

When Paul started dating Rita, he had a strong desire to follow Jewish customs, however Rita, a secular Jewess, was unfamiliar with many Jewish traditions herself. Paul solved this problem by contacting a friend of Rita's who was knowledgeable about Jewish customs. He, in turn, used this knowledge to teach and encourage Rita to follow Jewish traditions, including the weekly observance of Sabbath dinners.

Ultimately hands on experience was a powerful teacher for all participants. Sue recalled with great pleasure, her initiation at her first Passover seder* with her in-laws:

I didn't know anything about [Jewish traditions when we first married]. I was totally ignorant about all of that stuff. . . . [For my first] Passover seder I was the youngest person [in attendance]. So they made me ask the four questions*. It was hysterical [laughing wholeheartedly]! . . . And it was my in-laws of course who did this. . . . They were such sweet people and they wanted me to understand. . . . and be educated and so we did all these things. And so it was really a lot of fun, it was really nice. I loved it and I had a really good time.

As an active participant, Sue gained an experiential understanding of the Passover Seder. She reacted with excitement and a little trepidation, as many Jewish children do when they are first asked to ask the four questions.

Although Bessie often felt rejected by her mother-in-law, she connected with her by cooking traditional Jewish meals together. Although her mother-in-law was reticent to accept Bessie publicly, in the quiet and privacy of her home, she taught Bessie the ins and outs of traditional Jewish cooking:

She did it as kind of like a private type of thing rather than with a group or a community. . . . I don't know how that would've been if any other family would be there you see. . . . It was private. . . . She would like to show you how to cook things so that was an acceptance on its own. . . . I would ask

how to do this and she would say "well I'll show you" and she did, so that was nice. . . . It was very pleasant. . . . She was teaching you something and the main thing she said in regards to cooking, you had to put love in it and with her accent I would think she was saying "salt" but in fact it was "love". "With everything you do you have to put love in it", which you see again is certainly opposite on how she could make decisions on some other things. . . . She even welcomed me to. . . learn to cook some of her favorite dishes.

Because Bessie's parents lived in England, this taste of love and mentorship from her mother-in-law, who so often made her feel inadequate, had great meaning. Mentorship from within the family or community served to teach participants traditional practices and also made them feel welcomed, honored, and included.

Theme: Navigating Through the Life Cycle

Although interfaith issues were not central to participants' day to day lives, differences due to religion or culture needed to be negotiated during key life cycle events. The wedding ceremony, the religious upbringing of children, and religious participation in and out of home were navigated. It was important to find a balance between observing traditions and rituals, while at the same time meeting the needs of themselves, their partners, and their families. Participants defined their religious identification at different stages, and several had considered conversion to Judaism at some point. Financial negotiations were required for some couples to balance their support of religious institutions, charities, and holiday costs. Interestingly, intermarital challenges were not primarily related to the degree of religious affiliation of each partner, but rather to other factors including: overall marital adjustment, flexibility, communication, the relationship with the families of origin, and the shared values of couples.

The Wedding

The wedding ceremony is typically the first key life cycle event that couples needed to negotiate. Although couples readily chose the kinds of

ceremonies they wanted, they often experienced external challenges from family members or from rabbis. Six out of seven couples were married in civil ceremonies in secular surroundings, whereas one couple was married by a Catholic priest in a church. Three participants had wanted a rabbi to perform their ceremonies, however none were able to locate a rabbi who would officiate.

Three couples who chose civil ceremonies had little difficulty making their vision a reality. Nonetheless, these couples were challenged by family stressors. Richard and Lynda, for example, were married by a marriage commissioner in a civil ceremony that Richard fondly referred to as "number four", commonly known as "the Jew/Gentile special". Although Richard's in-laws had been supportive of their union up to this point, when it came to planning the wedding, Lynda's mother strongly requested that a rabbi be part of the ceremony. Richard and Lynda had talked little about religion up to this point in their relationship and having a rabbi present did not make sense for them. Richard felt a need to set a firm boundary to ensure that the ceremony was a reflection of his and Lynda's choosing:

We just simply said no. . . . I think she just thought we wouldn't be married. We'd be living in sin, it wouldn't be a marriage. . . . and the other thing that Lynda's mom was fighting was that one of her brothers was very orthodox so there was sort of an insult there. Not only is he not converting and all this stuff, but they're getting married in a bloody hotel by some guy who's doing ceremony number four. . . . I think her mother was scared something was going to happen or something. She was scared that this wasn't right. . . . I think she had internalized her religion so I think she thought this thing wasn't going to take. It wasn't real.

Bessie and Jack planned a civil ceremony despite Jack's mother's extreme disapproval of their union and her continual threats that she would not attend the wedding. Although her mother-in-law ultimately did attend the ceremony, Bessie waited apprehensively on her wedding day wondering whether or not she would show.

As an observant Mormon, Dan's father desperately wanted his son and Farrah to be married in a holy Mormon Temple*. When Dan and Farrah refused to do so, his father requested that the marriage take place in a Mormon Church. Dan's father was extremely distraught when the couple chose a civil ceremony instead to reflect their secular life choices:

While [my family] disapproved I don't think they were willing to throw me out of the family. . . . My father. . . told us that our wedding would be a disaster and on and on and on and he had to apologize because the wedding was nice. . . . There was one big argument. . . which he apologized for afterwards. . . . But I don't think Farrah will ever totally forgive him.

Although the families "came around" on their actual wedding day, Dan recalled the experience as being stressful. Further, a heated argument surrounding the wedding proved damaging to familial relationships over an extended period of time.

Three couples attempted to find a rabbi to participate in their wedding ceremonies but none were able to locate a rabbi willing to do so. Although one participant was accepting of the refusal, two felt disappointed and angry that religious rules and synagogue politics took precedence over their individual needs. Four participants had suggested to their spouses that they acquire representation from a non-Jewish clergy member. All but one Jewish mate indicated that either they themselves or their parents would not be comfortable with this. In one case, a Catholic priest was chosen to officiate the ceremony when rabbinical participation could not be obtained.

Despite the fact that Rita considers herself an atheist, she dreamed of being married by a rabbi under a traditional Jewish chuppah. When she and Paul were unable to find a Rabbi in Alberta to officiate, Paul made the suggestion that they could be married in his Anglican church. He chuckled to himself in retrospect, now recognizing that despite the fact that Rita considers

herself an atheist, her identity as a Jewess negated the possibility of a Christian ceremony. Ultimately, she and Paul were very satisfied with their outdoor secular wedding. Their integration of klezmer* music that they both enjoy, was a means of integrating Jewish culture into the celebration.

Trent, in contrast, was both surprised and disappointed when he and Marnie were unable to obtain rabbinical representation at their wedding ceremony. Trent had been able to obtain representatives from both a minister and Catholic priest in his first wedding and had appreciated the melding of two traditions. Although a rabbi from another province was prepared to officiate if Trent studied the principles of Judaism for several months, he and his partner wanted to get married right away:

What we attempted to do right off the top was to see if we could be married. . . by a rabbi. . . . Many of them said "no". Just flat "no". If you found one that was prepared to do it they wouldn't do it unless if I had gone through a series of religious courses of some sort. Not necessarily that I had to convert, but that I had to go through the classes. But we didn't have time to do that. . . . I found it kind of disappointing. . . . That kinda made me kind of mad. . . . I have a different concept of religion. It seems to me that religion of any kind is there to serve the individual that wants it, not to serve their own little peccadilloes. Just because I don't happen to be a Jew. . . it happens to mean something to the person who is marrying me. Why wouldn't they do it?

When Trent suggested that a minister officiate the ceremony, he learned that Marnie and her parents would not be comfortable with this. Ultimately, they also chose a civil ceremony.

Despite the fact that Christine's husband was extremely active in his synagogue and she had actively studied Judaism, they were unable to obtain rabbinical representation at their wedding. Christine was saddened by this and was visibly upset when she recalled the experience:

We were disappointed that we couldn't find a rabbi to participate in any kind of celebration. I thought it was quite disappointing that his synagogue didn't support our marriage. Some of them were invited and attended the wedding and that sort of thing, but you know, his treatment

by the synagogue when he approached them for some kind of blessing or something of our relationship was disappointing, particularly since he had. . . contributed just an enormous amount to the synagogue's development. We were married easily by a priest. You know, you'd think it'd be difficult to get married by a priest, but it was fine. He was quite prepared to marry us. But not the synagogue [pause to compose herself]. It's ok, it's ok. . . I mean, I don't care what their beliefs are. . . . I thought they should have been so happy for Sam. You know, because he's such a good person and we're so happy and have such a good marriage that I thought it would have been nice to have the blessing of the congregation.

Christine felt that this treatment was unjust in light of the fact that she and Sam are equally, if not more active in their synagogue than many endogamous Jewish couples. She felt the lack of the support was political, believing that the Reform synagogue feared it would be rejected by the conservative Jewish movement if it endorsed intermarriage. Like Trent, she felt angry that synagogue politics took precedence over their personal feelings and needs.

Children and Religious Upbringing

Another key life cycle event requiring negotiation relates to having children and deciding in which faith, if any, they will be raised. Two participants had children as a product of their intermarriages, one anticipated having children in the future, and three had children from previous marriages. Of the two participants who had children in the context of their intermarriages, one couple had raised them in the Jewish faith and the other chose to introduce their children to both religions. The participant planning to have children in the future indicated that he and his wife planned to raise their child in the Jewish tradition, and a participant who was unable to have children for medical reasons indicated that their child would have been raised Jewish. Couples who brought children into their interfaith marriages from previous marriages continued to raise their children as they previously had.

Early decisions. All participants indicated that initially they had agreed upon the religious upbringing of their children with relative ease. Bessie and Jack, for example, agreed to teach their children about both religions: "The only thing we had arranged when we were married was that any children we had would decide themselves. We wouldn't teach religion one way or the other." Jack and Bessie followed through with their initial decision with little difficulty.

We observed holidays for both sides of the religion. We practiced more the niceties of both religions rather than the fears of anyone's religion. . . . I believe. . . religion is something that you feel. You should go out and learn about all religions and you make your choice.

Although Bessie felt rejected by her mother-in-law, she was delighted when her mother-in-law adored and accepted her granddaughter. Ironically, child rearing, often a source of conflict in the lives of intermarried couples, proved to be a means of healing and connection between Bessie and her mother-in-law.

In contrast to Bessie, several participants reflected that the child rearing negotiations would have complicated their relationships considerably. Although Trent, Paul, and Christine did not have children as a product of their intermarriages, they all recognized that doing so would have required a great deal of negotiation with their Jewish partners. Trent chose not to have children given his age and the fact that he had children in a previous marriage. He expressed the complicating effect that having children would have had in the context of his intermarriage:

We don't have children to focus that whole religious experience around. We're quite comfortable just sort of operating within our own religions and filling in for the other to the extent that we can. I think children would bring a different perspective to it entirely. Because you'd then have to start to choose. . . . I'd have to wrestle with the prospect of do I convert in order to raise them in the Jewish religion or how we would handle that?

Paul and Rita also chose not to have children because they married later in life. Paul recognized that he would have wanted to raise his children in both religions. He felt this would have created some dissonance because his wife would not have wanted to participate more actively as a Jewess.

Both Paul, an observant Anglican, and Christine, a practicing Catholic, reflected that raising their children in two religious traditions would have been particularly complicated. As Paul reflected, "How would the bris* and the baptism be at the same time? I don't know how that would work?" Christine echoed Paul's concerns: "Are they going to Sunday school? Are they going to have a bar-mitzvah or are they going to have first communion? You know, I think that would be the hard issue and I haven't had to deal with that". Dan believed that child rearing would have been insurmountable in the context of intermarriage had he continued to follow the Mormon faith:

I don't think an interfaith marriage of a strong Mormon and even a semi-strong Jewish person could, I don't think it could work. . . . As a matter of fact I can't see how it could work. Maybe somebody is out there that can prove me wrong but I really don't. . . . I think where it might really become a problem is when kids came into the picture.

Although much of Christianity has evolved out of Judaism, he recognized that Mormonism and Jewish traditions are distinct from one another and would be difficult to combine.

Flexibility: shifting gears midstream. Although Richard, Dan, and Sue had negotiated child rearing issues with their respective spouses, these participants were taken aback when their Jewish mates later "came out of remission" and felt a strong need to raise their children Jewish. Before Richard and Lynda married, they agreed to raise their future children in the United Church. Because Richard was raised as a Catholic and Lynda was raised as a Jewess, they believed that they had reached an agreeable compromise. Five years later, however, during Lynda's first pregnancy, Richard was surprised

when Lynda's Jewish identity became rekindled and the religious upbringing of their future child suddenly needed to be re-negotiated:

I think her Judaism was in remission. . . She was raised [Jewish] as a young child and she went to [parochial] school and took Hebrew. She was moved into public school. . . and then she went into remission. . . . The remission of her Judaism lasted until she became pregnant. So watch out! It was in remission, but it was there full and committed and dedicated, but you wouldn't have known it. For five years we had sort of blindly gone along and we thought "Well we'll both go United and this is going to work out great". At about three or four months pregnant Lynda said, "Well, what if this is a boy?". . . . And I said, "Well, w--what do you mean?" And she said, "Well, are we going to have him circumcised or what are we going to do?"

Richard described a process of shifting gears and letting go of his previous decision to raise their children in the United Church. Although religion had not been important for him up until this point, Richard began to realize that he wanted to give his child a religious upbringing:

I was profoundly affected by a guy [many years back] in university. . . . One day we were sitting having lunch and he said, "What are you going to do about the kids?" And I said, "We're going to go United". . . . And he said, "Well, that's good because the kids got to have something". And he just went on to eating his sandwich. Now, to this day, he has no idea how profound that was when he said that because [up until then] I had a thought that the kids could have nothing. . . . And strangely enough, when Lynda became pregnant, and we sort of began to discuss the bris and all that, I suddenly remembered, "No, they've got to have something". . . . It took me about a month to recognize that she was going to be the primary caregiver and what the hell was I going to interfere? I didn't have a religion, what was I going to give them? . . . So it took about a month of feeling that Lynda had betrayed the pact. . . . that we were going to raise them United or nothing or whatever. . . . After about a month I said, "Okay, she's the primary care giver. She's got something to give".

As Lynda "came out of remission" with respect to Judaism, Richard also discovered the importance he placed on providing his children with a religious upbringing and identity. In this case, the primary role of religious upbringing was designated to his wife.

When Dan's wife, Farrah came out of remission with respect to Judaism several years ago, Dan also recognized a desire to provide his children with a religious upbringing. Farrah's renewed interest in Judaism, combined with Dan's intrigue with Jewish traditions, sparked his desire to raise their future children Jewish. As we will see subsequently, this decision had great meaning for Dan with respect to his relationship with his Mormon family, particularly his father.

Although Sue and David had talked little about religion prior to their marriage, they decided to raise their children in both their religious traditions, just as David's intermarried sister had done. When his sister's marriage ended, however, David and Sue witnessed the children undergoing an "identity crisis", not knowing to which faith they belonged. Later, when Sue and David began planning to have a family, David realized that he wanted his children to be raised solely as Jews. Because religious identity in Judaism has traditionally been determined by the religion of the mother, David felt that his children needed to be raised as Jews if they were going to have a Jewish identity.

Despite the fact that Sue did not feel a strong affiliation with the United Church, she worried that she would be unable share some of her Christian traditions with her children. She acknowledged also, that parental pressures would have exacerbated the struggle:

I think if we'd had children it would've been hard for a while because my parents were very adamant that if you have children you're going to tell them about what Christianity is and David was very much--if we have children they will be raised as Jewish children. So it could've been a conflict. . . . I sort of dreaded it for a time when we thought that we were going to have children. . . because I could see this looming on the horizon. We're going to have to deal with this and how are we going to do that? . . . His ideas had changed since we had gotten married and talked about [raising them in] both. . . . Like I agree that you shouldn't confuse children. I've seen the product of confusion and I don't think it's very good, but it would've been hard just because I would've wanted to share that with the child too.

Ultimately, these issues were moot since Sue and David weren't able to conceive children. Sue's story illustrates, however, the unique pressures that Gentile women can face with respect to child rearing issues, given the Jewish tradition of matrilineal descent. These stories highlight the need for communication, compromise, and flexibility when negotiating the religious upbringing of children.

Once the decision of religious identity of the children is decided, the process of putting the choice into action began. After deciding to raise their children in the Jewish faith, Richard and Lynda began navigating a means of fulfilling their newfound commitment. During Lynda's pregnancy, they began negotiating how they would fulfill the circumcision rite if their child were male. When Lynda suggested that their Jewish pediatrician could do the circumcision and say a Jewish prayer rather than having a traditional ceremony performed by a mohel*, Richard felt a sense of relief and gratitude that his wife found a means of meeting both of their needs. Given the fact that their commitment was new and Richard was unaccustomed to many Jewish traditions, he appreciated the creative compromise and moderation that Lynda demonstrated:

To my mind, Lynda doesn't know this, but that was an incredibly. . . it was a long way for her to come, to commit to that. I mean because she had to come away from a full bris with everybody coming out and the whole schmear [thing, production], and she figured out a way to do it that would satisfy her and not cause any problem to me. It . . . was a startlingly, brilliant idea. . . . She hasn't wrenched this concept from me and said, "No, we're doing the full bris and all that stuff". And I think that decision on her part, to do it that way was probably the single most [important] thing that won me over the quickest to the decision for Talmud Torah and raising them Jewish. Because she approached it moderately.

This process of negotiation set in motion a pattern of mutually satisfying compromise. Ultimately, their children were educated in parochial schools and celebrated bar-mitzvahs. Richard indicated that he felt that his children benefited from their Jewish education, both intellectually and culturally, and he

was filled with pride when his sons confidently performed their bar-mitzvah rites:

I was very proud and just really proud. I mean the people from my office who had never been to a bar-mitzvah before were astounded, I mean both the kids, both did extraordinarily well and. . . to have a 13 year old kid stand up and do that is unknown to Gentiles. I mean, they see my children up there and they think 'They're going to conquer the world'. . . . So I was very proud.

In contrast to Richard and Lynda, Bessie and Jack provided their daughters with a generally secular upbringing and celebrated "the niceties of both traditions". They celebrated holidays from both traditions, provided their daughters with a secular education, and they did not have bat-mitzvahs. Both Bessie and Jack were comfortable with their child-rearing focus, and the religious upbringing of their children was not an issue requiring a great deal of negotiation.

Blended families. Children from previous marriages who had been raised in the Jewish faith by their partners in a previous marriage continued accordingly, whereas those who had been raised in their respective Christian faiths continued to be raised in the same way. These children were adolescents at the time of marriage and their religious upbringing had previously been established. Although this greatly reduced the negotiation required with respect to the religious upbringing of their children, Christine indicated that at times, religious differences were a source of tension. Blended family issues and religious issues intersected, for example, when Christine's children were resentful that their mother chose not to serve pork products in her home out of respect for her husband and his Jewish child:

I think the [kids] maybe thought I was going a little overboard, you know, trying to support Sam in his religion. They became somehow more Catholic than they'd been before [laughing]. You know what I mean? . . . I mean, just sort of 'Well, we're Catholic. We're Christians'. . . . sort of thing. . . . It was my impression that they somehow felt that they had to

protect their status a bit They were furious about bacon. That was an issue. . . . Everything good for breakfast suddenly had pork in it!

Finding a balance between the needs of herself and her children on one hand, and the needs of her husband and his child on the other, required negotiation.

Death and Burial

In order to be buried in a Jewish cemetery and given a Jewish burial, a person must be Jewish. As a result, two participants needed to pre-think their future burial of themselves and their partners. Recognizing that it is important for her to be buried in a Jewish cemetery, Lynda discussed her concerns with husband. Richard indicated that he accepts that this is important for Lynda and that he may ultimately convert so that his wife's wish to be buried with him in a Jewish cemetery will be fulfilled:

I would do it because it's important to Lynda. . . . After [many] years of marriage I . . . just understand that that's an integral part of her being. It's woven through her. It cannot be separated out, it cannot. . . . She doesn't have to tell me why or explain it logically. She says "I want to be buried with you, and you cannot be buried in a Jewish cemetery if you don't convert" and that's all she has to say. It's so much a part of her being that I certainly have no desire to ridicule or try and get scientific about it. . . . That just doesn't enter into it. It seems very reasonable. I don't think about death or what's going to happen to me or services or ceremonies or funerals or whatever. It's just something I don't think about as a person. So she says she wants something to do with it and I'm not going to say "no".

When a highly publicized plane crash brought the question of mortality to the fore, Rita felt a need to plan her future burial. Because Paul is not Jewish, the couple will ultimately be buried in a secular cemetery. Paul disclosed that Rita was disappointed when she had great difficulty finding a rabbi who would agree to say the traditional burial prayer of Kaddish* for her if she were not buried in a Jewish cemetery. Ultimately, they were able to find a rabbi who

would say the Kaddish for Rita and at Paul's request, Rita's Jewish daughter will say Kaddish for him.

To Convert or Not to Convert?

Issues of religious identity and conversion tended to surface during life cycle stages and transitions: prior to weddings, the birth of children, bar-or bat-mitzvahs, or in the process of planning for death and burials. Women indicated that they knew of few Gentile females in interfaith marriages who had not converted to Judaism. In addition, several felt that women were particularly vulnerable to being pressured to convert to Judaism. Christine, an observant Catholic, felt a need to make clear to her husband's Jewish community that she would not be converting to Judaism. She described the pressure associated with being the only intermarried Gentile woman in her synagogue who had not converted to Judaism:

There's a tremendous pressure on females to convert, even if you're not of childbearing age. There are very few members in our congregation. In fact I can't think of any [women] who aren't Jewish. I think there are lots of intermarriages where Jewish men marry non-Jewish women, but they aren't necessarily affiliated. If the women don't convert, the men don't affiliate. . . . People gave up any idea that I would [convert] because I'm so adamant in not [laughing]! I was that way from the beginning. There was never a question about converting. . . . There was never an expectation [on Sam's part] that I would convert. It's more vis a vis the community. And I've always maintained the same position. I will support his activity and enjoy in his activity and I remain a Catholic, you know, forever. So, I mean I think I've had less pressure than someone who might have in some way given out any kind of signals that they were ambivalent.

Although Christine recognized that at some level both she and her husband would ideally have preferred if they were of the same faith, they have accepted early on that this would never happen: "I'd like him to be a Christian and it's not going to happen either way. . . . It's abundantly clear to me too that he's thoroughly Jewish and happily so and that's that. There is no campaign either

way [laughing]". Christine could not fathom Sam ever converting to Christianity: "It wouldn't be a genuine conversion. . . it would be a real road to Damascus. . . so out of character. It just wouldn't happen. That's all there's to it".

Sue recalled that some of her husband's friends believed that he was "doing a very stupid thing marrying somebody who wouldn't convert". Since she did not identify strongly with her own United Church upbringing, Sue felt she would not be able to affiliate strongly as a Jewess. Although her husband is a Zionist, who strongly identified as a Jew culturally, he had little desire for formal religion or ritual in his life. Sue believes that this alleviated the pressure for her to convert that she might have otherwise faced. When she considered conversion briefly before they married, in an attempt to avoid negative reactions from the Jewish community, David questioned her motivation and discouraged her from converting for external reasons:

One time I said to him "how does a person go about it?". . . early on in our relationship. "What happens?" and he said "It's not just easy, you're not just gonna go in and do it". . . . He said "You'd have to prove you are sincere and you'd have to study and you'd have to do this and that" and I thought about it for a long time. "You're right I don't want to do that". He's been really good, he sort of makes you think. . . . Whenever we've had discussions about religion that way, he's always made me think about the whole picture, you know, not just the one little part that I may be focusing on at any one time. . . . It became more and more obvious that it wasn't a viable option because . . . I had sort of deep doubts of organized religion to begin with and you can't embrace another religion if you're not sure about religion in general. It's one thing to be born into it but it's another thing to convert. I mean you have to really buy the whole thing in order to do the conversion thing.

Because women are traditionally responsible for maintaining a Jewish home, female participants recognized the challenges facing female converts to Judaism:

Oh Lord, if I'd gotten into it that would've been really difficult because. . . certainly the people that I know. . . the ladies who have converted. . . are very observant, keeping entirely kosher homes and so forth. Actually, they're the instigators of the practice of religion within their homes, right?

I mean it falls upon the women in most cases to make the meals and seders and to perform the rituals.

In addition to the commitment involved in keeping a Jewish home, Christine spoke of her inability to give up her own sacred beliefs:

The converts are. . . really active. These women are really, really committed and they practically are the foundation of some of these temples. They really get into it. . . I mean it's not that there's anything about Judaism that I don't believe. I believe everything Jewish people believe, But I mean if, you know, you also believe in Christ, well then, it's then it's pretty hard to not believe in Christ all of a sudden [laughing]!

Bessie indicated that conversion was a non-issue for her since she and her husband did not have a strong belief in organized religion. Interestingly, she was not pressured to convert by her mother-in-law, despite her strong opposition to the intermarriage.

Trent's wife did not expect him to convert to Judaism because he had raised his children from a previous marriage as Christians. Although he does not consider himself to be strongly observant, Trent indicated that conversion would be problematic because his denomination "means something" to him. Paul recognized that his wife had no desire for him to convert to Judaism, because doing so would require her to participate more fully in her Jewish traditions: "My wife doesn't want me to convert because then I would make her keep a kosher kitchen. . . . she's happy the way things are".

Issues of religious identity surfaced for both Richard and Dan with respect to child rearing. Prior to their son's bar-mitzvah, Richard's wife encouraged him to convert to Judaism. As described earlier, the question was raised again when Lynda contemplated their future burial. During these life cycle stages, Richard's wife, his sons, and their rabbi encouraged him to consider conversion. He grappled with his love for his family and his desire to convert for "the right" reasons. Initially Richard resisted conversion because he had no visceral feeling toward any religion, including Judaism:

Lynda asked me to convert before Mark's bar-mitzvah. It was a strange conversation 'cause she hinted at it and hinted at it and hinted at it and then sort of came right out and said it. And I said, "I have left my religion. And I don't care about religion. What kind of Jew do you think I'd be? I mean. . . I have no connection to any organized religion." And it only took once, I only said that once to her and that was it she left the topic.

Despite the fact that they have spoken little about conversion over the years, Richard understands that it would mean a great deal to his family if he converted to Judaism. His decision to convert in the future is motivated by this awareness, as opposed to an internal connection with Judaism. Although he hoped to convert later in his life when he could devote himself fully in the process, he indicated that he would likely do so earlier for practical reasons:

There's some pretty observant members of her family. . . . I think. . . they would have the same questions about my conversion as I have about my conversion. Like "How serious are you about this thing?" "Is it really a part of you?" "Are you embracing this with your very soul?" I mean that's what religion is about. . . . It may turn out as time goes on that I may decide to convert other than at a time that's perfect simply because I'm getting older and this being buried thing is going to become a little more real.

Dan's decision to leave the Mormon church required a great deal of wrestling with himself and with external pressures from his Mormon family and community. When he and Farrah decided that they would raise their children Jewish, Dan began to consider converting to Judaism. At the same time, however, he was mindful that he wants to do so for the "right" reasons. Dan was attracted to the fact that Judaism does not advocate proselytizing as Mormonism does. He appreciated that he has not felt pressure from Farrah or her family to convert to Judaism:

[My wife converted to Mormonism by] meeting with these missionaries, being taught, doing some reading and studying and praying and deciding. That's one of the things that turns me off of the religion the way they do this. It turns out to be quite a pressuring thing and I think that's why she really did convert. . . . [I have not been pressured] at all. Her side of the family is not that way at all. And from what I've seen of Judaism it's not that way at all because it doesn't seem they're actively

searching for people to convert. People come to them if they want to convert. They come to the synagogue if want to convert it's not the other way around. . . . As far as I'm concerned you don't want to get involved in a religion for all the wrong reasons. I mean that was partly what I did when I was 18. I was doing what everybody was telling me what I should be doing rather than what I wanted to be doing and what I felt I should be doing.

Over the years, Dan had become attracted to the Jewish sense of family and the traditions. At the preliminary stages of considering conversion, however, he recognized that he feels drawn to Judaism for reasons that are not entirely clear to him:

I think the feelings [for Judaism] are always stronger at say for instance at bar-mitzvahs or weddings, at those kinds of things it's always stronger. But the feelings are always there. I don't know, something is drawing me towards it. I don't know what it is.

Dan will likely keep his future conversion secret from his Mormon family in order to avoid hurting his father. He hopes that over the years, his family will discover and eventually accept his decisions:

I think it would be extremely hard on my dad. . . . I don't think it's worth it, where it's putting him through the hardship of it. . . . I don't think I would tell them. . . . I don't think I could manage that one. Well I could manage it but it would be very difficult. . . . I think by the time that it comes along [to my children's bar-mitzvahs] my family will know that they are being raised Jewish and I think they would be supportive.

Although his family will likely be pleased to discover he is no longer leading a secular life, Dan believed they would feel that he is participating in "the wrong religion".

Tackling Traditions: Give and Take

Mutual respect, acceptance, and support in relation to religious participation was exceedingly important. Boundaries needed to be set and pushing one another to participate in ways that were not comfortable was discouraged. Many couples enjoyed sharing their traditions with one another and their respective communities. Participating in both traditions required a

greater commitment of time and necessitated creative solutions when holidays overlapped. Several felt they had gained through their participation in Jewish traditions. In some instances, however, theological differences and religious traditions required compromises.

Respect, acceptance, and compromise. An attitude of respect and understanding was important in navigating religion and traditions. Developing ground rules was one means of setting respectful boundaries. During their courtship, for example, Paul promised Rita that he would answer her theological questions, but that he would respect her atheist beliefs and would not "lecture her" about religion. Paul viewed acceptance, sharing, and understanding of religious and cultural differences as being endemic to his conception of marriage:

You don't get married to live separate lives. You get married to appreciate the person and unless you come fully aware of what they're thinking, fully aware of why they do what they do, you're marriage is incomplete, you're not a couple, you're just two people cohabiting.

Paul's Anglican beliefs assisted him in accepting religious differences, without fearing negative consequences in the after-life:

In the Book of Acts. . . . Peter says "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and your whole household shall be saved". So for me it's not necessary. Even if Rita was an Atheist, as she professes to be, it's my job, in other words. So that doesn't pose for me a problem.

Christine also spoke of the mutual acceptance that she and Sam practice with respect to their religious differences: "We are both pretty committed, and to protect your own right to participate in your own religion you have to be tolerant of the other person's right to participate in his".

Richard's willingness to compromise was influenced by his awareness that religious differences can be destructive in any marriage, even those that are endogamous:

Another Jewish couple that we know who because he was Orthodox, he didn't want to have a bat-mitzvah for his daughter. So the wife and the daughter went to another synagogue, and that was a source of quite some strife--and they were both Jewish. So I said to him. . . . "Never in my mind did I think that you would have more religious problems in your marriage than me". . . . I've gone through two bar-mitzvahs, very Jewish celebrations, very accepting in participating and he's fighting with his wife over this!

Richard was both proud and relieved that he and his wife had successfully navigated religious challenges through the years.

Part of respecting one another involved setting boundaries in the face of familial pressures. When her mother-in-law periodically requested that Sue participate more actively in Jewish rituals or accompany her to synagogue services, David strongly supported his wife:

David is very protective of me in the sense that he'd say [to his mother] "Why would she do that? She's not Jewish?" So he's really good. The first few times I could've felt like I should, you know, out of respect for her, I should go and learn how to do these things for her. But actually, over time I think that my husband was right. I think that it was right for him to say "No you don't have to you shouldn't because it's not part of who you are".

In so doing, David helped Sue maintain her own boundaries rather than participating out of a sense of guilt or pressure.

Religious and traditional participation both in and out of home was often a process of give and take. It was important to find a balance that would meet both their own, their partners', and their families' needs. Christine described a process of compromise that many participants underwent:

I think each couple must establish their own. . . traditions. You sort of feel your way at first to see how it goes. Particularly as you're newly trying . . . do things right [laughing]. The effort needs to be made to work it out and come to something that's comfortable that both can live with.

As we will see, kosher practices, Sabbath observance, synagogue and church attendance, holiday celebrations, and financial matters often required a process of negotiation and compromise.

Keeping kosher. None of the participants kept strict kosher homes, although several eliminated certain foods such as pork products in their home out of respect for their partners or their partners' family. Some also observed dietary laws during Passover holidays. Participants felt that kosher laws made sense historically due to issues of cleanliness, but were no longer relevant in modern times. Christine initially tried to keep a kosher home to support her husband, but was grateful when he was prepared to let go of this tradition when she found the responsibility daunting:

I tried to cook kosher at first to tell you the truth. I just found it too difficult. I just couldn't . . . Everything I'd start to cook broccoli and cheese and [then realize] 'no [we're serving meat so] we can't have can't have cheese sauce!' . . . I thought 'G-d! We're having people over, what can we eat [laughing]?' . . . I'm sure there are people who cook their whole lives and. . . prepare beautiful meals. . . à la kosher--not me!!!! So. . . you sort of work your way through the different expectations and compromises.

Trent appreciated his mother-in-law's flexibility when she visits from out of town. Because his mother-in-law observes kosher dietary laws, she takes the initiative to cook herself when she visits their home. As a show of respect, Trent and Marnie remove non-kosher foods from their kitchen before their in-laws arrive. In this way, the family practices mutual respect and acceptance, while meeting their own individual needs.

Shabbat dinners. Christine and Paul both made weekly Shabbat dinners on Friday night with their spouses, whereas other participants did so periodically. Paul initiated the celebration of weekly Shabbat and researched the appropriate prayers and customs involved because as a secular Jewess, Rita did not have this information. Christine enjoys her and Sam's weekly Shabbat dinners, but as a professional woman she finds it a challenge to prepare a beautiful meal at the end of a tiring work week.

We always have a . . . Shabbat dinner. A nice meal every Friday night and you know the bread and the wine and the candles . . . I like Shabbat, I think Shabbat's a great idea. . . I wish it weren't on Friday night [when] you're so exhausted. It's a stretch. I suppose it's from days when women stayed home and could prepare a nice meal.

Despite the effort required, Christine and Sam are committed to their weekly observance. Other participants, like Richard, indicated that although they enjoyed Sabbath dinners, they were unwilling to commit to celebrating Sabbath on a weekly basis:

I suppose for me the prospect of a Friday night dinner every Friday night for the rest of my life was the scariest. That every Friday night you couldn't make any plans 'cause you were gonna go have chicken soup and chicken'. And this sounds harsher than it is but. . . that wasn't for me.

Richard indicated that moving to another city away from his wife's family gave him the freedom not to observe Sabbath weekly.

Synagogue and church attendance. Christine and Paul attended church and synagogue with their partners on a regular basis. These participants indicated that they appreciated the mutual support of their partners when they attended church with them. Paul was pleased that his wife was accepted by his parish when she accompanied him to church:

She actually gets a better reception at the church than I do! They really do like her there. They put themselves out, not with a view of converting her, but just to welcome her. . . The people will come over to her and say "The peace of the Lord be with you" and she'll respond as a good Jew. When we had the seder [at the church], Rita was in charge of making the chicken soup and . . . three ladies were helping her. They were really really interested in Jewish cooking and how to do this properly.

Others, like Sue, attended synagogue or church solely on special occasions or for holiday services:

I don't spend a lot of time in synagogue. I go for my friend's kids' bar-mitzvahs and I go to weddings and stuff. But I don't attend synagogue and my husband would not attend church. . . You do those things. . . out of respect for the people involved.

Sue indicated that her husband has little need for ritual and at some level may benefit from the intermarriage, because it gives him a legitimate reason not to attend synagogue and other religious celebrations regularly.

Participants needed to make a conscious choice about the importance of attending synagogue or church, given their busy schedules, and in some cases, due to the lack of connection the services had for their spouses. Richard commented that it was important to him that he attend synagogue services with his family, because as a child, he disliked when his father did not come along to church. In contrast, Trent recognized that he attends church somewhat less now that he is intermarried:

I suppose being intermarried ,if, you know [when you ask] "Should we go to church tonight?" the answer is more frequently "no" than. . . . it is to bundle off and. . . go. . . . Since it didn't mean anything to Mamie so it was easy for me to make a decision to say "Well that's not that important for me I won't do it".

Similar to Trent's discomfort in synagogue service, Mamie had told Trent that she felt uncomfortable in church where theological differences were highlighted: "She said she found it kind of strange. Jewish people, of course, don't believe in Jesus, so that was a bit of a dichotomy". Others commented that attending both synagogue and church services required particular commitment due to the time required.

Holidays. For some, holiday participation had less of a religious meaning, and was viewed instead as a way of respecting and connecting with spouses, family, and friends:

We've tried to sort of respect everybody. So he comes with me to my family we do Christmas and I go with him to his mom's and we have Passover and we go to our friends for Rosh Hashanah*. You know I mean we try. . . . to do a little of both. More in terms of family not the religious observance.

Although religious celebrations were not important to her husband, Bessie helped her mother-in-law cook Jewish holiday meals as a way to share the traditions with her daughter and connect with her mother-in-law. Bessie was disappointed when her husband showed no interest in these efforts:

It wasn't important to him. He'd rather go and watch television. You'd have to call him in between courses and things like that. It was always actually [my daughter] and I who would promote it more for [my mother-in-law] so. . . . that she would enjoy it. We would enjoy what she cooked because she put all the effort into cooking There was never any appreciation [by my husband] for that type of thing. It was always too much of a chore for him to go and do these things.

In Bessie's case, her efforts were appreciated by her mother-in-law, but not her husband. In contrast, Paul was grateful when Rita took special care to cook a proper Christmas meal for him: "She said, 'well, what do you make?' So she's always made a fish dinner because . . . it's supposed to be a meatless meal". He, in turn, helped Rita make traditional Jewish foods, such as potato latkes* on Hanukkah and hamentaschen* on Purim*.

Flexibility was required when religious holidays overlapped. Because Jewish holidays follow the Jewish Calendar (which is based on both the solar and lunar systems), they fall on different dates every year. When holiday rituals had a religious meaning, creativity was required to solve contradictions resulting from overlapping holidays. Christine, along with others, found ways to meet their own needs while supporting their partners' traditions:

When Passover falls on Good Friday, that's tricky. You know you're supposed to be celebrating and drinking four cups of wine on a day when you're supposed to be fasting and abstaining. . . and so, what do you do? [laughing]. . . It's happened, I think twice since we've been married. . . . If Easter happens during Passover you want to have Easter breads and you know, sort of the usual Easter celebration in a house that's Kosher for Passover. . . . If we have a seder on Good Friday, I wouldn't drink wine. You know, because you're not permitted to drink wine on holy, on Good Friday. I would just have four cups of. . . grape juice. And if we have a meat meal or something because it's celebratory, well, I just don't eat the meat.

The meaning and practice of holidays such as Easter and Christmas needed to be discussed when they threatened their spouses' sense of safety or identity. Paul's wife, Rita, for example, grew up in Europe as a child. For her, Easter was a time of anti-Semitism when Jews often suffered violence and blame for the crucifixion of Christ. Paul indicated that he felt a need to reassure Rita that this blame was unfounded:

I tell her it's a misinterpretation of the Bible because it's quite obvious that the crucifixion was carried out by Roman soldiers. Jews did not crucify. Their favorite method was stoning outside the city limits. So it was a Roman crucifixion. My guys did it, not hers.

Other participants described enjoying Easter egg hunts with their partners and many tended not focus on the religious meaning of the holiday.

Several couples celebrated Passover dinners in their homes or at the homes of family or friends. Trent anticipated an upcoming Passover seder, the first that his wife planned to share with his family:

Passover. . . is one of her favorite celebrations. She made a comment the other day that she might put together a seder meal for the family. . . . So we'll see what happens. Certainly my mother would be more than happy to participate because she enjoys that kind of thing. . . . but being a daughter of a Baptist minister, it might be a little strange.

Christine and Sam enjoy the opportunity to share their Jewish holidays with their non-Jewish friends: "We've had lots of parties on Rosh Hashanah. . . . We've had lots of seders and have invited Christians because they love them. . . . They think the Passover liturgy is gorgeous".

Some recognized that their Jewish partners were disappointed in some way when they were unable or unwilling to participate fully in Jewish traditions. Although the disappointments were often not voiced by their Jewish partners, the messages had been received implicitly. Richard felt his wife's unspoken disappointment when he did not participate fully in Jewish rituals:

Lynda I think feels funny but hides the fact that she can't participate the way others can. But she's been very kind because she's never let me know. I have to guess that it tears at her. That her husband can't or won't or doesn't do these things. She's never said anything. I suspect that if we're marking another twenty years on our 40th anniversary she'll say, "You know it's really pissed me off all these years, that we had all these holidays and you couldn't do anything". But she's never said anything.

At some level, Sue also questioned whether her husband David would have participated more fully in Jewish traditions had he married a Jewess. Following our first interview, Sue felt compelled to confirm with her husband that he was content with the level and extent of their religious participation:

I went home and I asked him does it bother you that we don't do these things? [laughing] I started to think about it and asked him "are you really missing all of this?" and he said "no, not at all". And so I thought, "Okay, we're cool with that".

Although her husband has little need for Jewish ritual, sometimes Sue feels a sense of guilt that she is not meeting her mother-in-law's desire for Jewish tradition:

I feel bad for her because I sense that it would be very nice for her to have it [the seder] the way she would like it. I suppose you know, if I was Jewish then . . . she would come to us right. We would make a big evening and she would be part of a larger gathering and she would get that sense and so I feel, guilty, I feel a little bad that it doesn't turn out the way she would like it to turn out.

In contrast, Paul recognized that he often wanted Rita to participate more fully in Judaism than she normally would have. He was mindful of not pushing Rita to participate in her religion in ways that were uncomfortable for her. These examples illustrate that compromises can, at times, yield feelings of disappointment, guilt, or feelings of inadequacy.

The celebration of Christmas was handled differently by each couple. Several couples celebrated Christmas without reservation, whereas two participants indicated that their partners or in-laws were uncomfortable having a Christmas tree or decorations in their home. Those who honored both

Christmas and Hanukkah indicated that their celebrations were enriched by the joining of the two traditions:

Christmas is a big deal around here. You have to see this house. I mean, it's quite extraordinary! [laughing]. . . We've got everything up! [laughing] We celebrate everything! . . . every year we have a Hanukkah Christmas party and sort of invite everyone we know and they all like to come because everybody secretly likes the other one [laughing]. . . . And we celebrate it during Hanukkah you know because Christmas is such a long season, you can have it anytime, Right. We light the candles and. . . have an open house or something like that.

Similarly, Paul was touched when his wife Rita enjoyed decorating the Christmas tree and referred to it as "our tree": "It meant a lot to me that she accepted it full [heartedly] because I support her in her Jewish activities, and I think it's just part of the marriage that she supports me". Both Christine and Paul indicated that their Jewish partners loved celebrating Christmas since they had always wished that they could celebrate the holiday as children: "Sam talked about a kind of hating Christmas before he met me. . . . Just because he was never part of it. . . Now he gets to be a part of it without having to betray his beliefs".

In contrast, several found that their partners were uncomfortable having any Christmas ornamentation in their homes and saw the celebration of Christmas as a betrayal of their traditions. Sue described a process of testing out the waters earlier in their marriage to see how her husband would feel about having Christmas decorations in their home:

For a few years off and on I would sort of do something that was Christmasy around the house and he used to make these little sort of cracks about it and so I kind of stopped doing it. . . . I'd say "well this is my tree". . . or I'd have something. . . like Charlie Brown Christmas with a candy cane hanging on here [laughing]. He would just kind of make a crack about it, but not to be mean and not say "get rid of that", but he would've drawn the line if I had been out hanging Christmas lights on the front of the house [laughing]. It would've been over the top.

Ultimately, Sue chose not to put up Christmas decoration since she realized that this was not comfortable for her husband. Although she would have enjoyed celebrating in their home Sue was grateful that David was willing to come to her mother's home for Christmas celebrations:

He comes with me and that's really nice. I mean he could say "no I'll just stay home". . . . I think it's very nice of him to come. It would be really hard, I wouldn't be able to go if he wouldn't come with me. That would make it impossible. I couldn't leave him at home and go. That is a very big thing that he does for me.

Sue acknowledged that for the first few years she "missed" having a Christmas tree and found it "hard". Because David did not celebrate Jewish customs in their home, however, Sue felt that their compromise was equitable.

Two other participants indicated that although they put up Christmas trees in their home, they took down the trees before Jewish family or friends visited. For Bessie, taking down the Christmas tree prior to her mother-in-law's visits, was a way of avoiding conflict and showing her mother-in-law respect: "I didn't mind. . . because you have to understand his mother was funny. And that I understood, so there was no rationale to anything. . . . It was just to more or less to please her in my home."

Bessie realized in retrospect, however, that her attempts to win her mother-in-law's approval were ultimately unhealthy for her personally. She identified a number of factors that lead to her putting the needs of others first:

Perhaps I'm a little naive with things. I've always respected elderly people and the idiosyncrasies that people have. You can't please everybody so. . . it's always. . . a kind of a give and take. But in this particular instance it's always give. You think perhaps would it have been different if I'd have stood up to it? I don't know. But then do you want to have confrontation and a split? . . . There wouldn't have been a split between my husband and myself, but there would've been the distance between his family . . . and he's the only son so. . . you put other people before yourself.

Ultimately, Bessie felt that she gave fully of herself, but received little in return.

Richard accepts his wife's discomfort with having a Christmas tree in their home and removes the tree prior to having Jewish visitors. He recognized that over the years she has become increasingly uncomfortable with the tree and views it as a sign of assimilation and destruction of her own culture:

For generations and centuries everyone has been trying to either kill the Jews. . . or do whatever they can to blunt the continuation of any Jewish culture or religion. . . . With the Christmas tree up, Lynda feels she is assimilating too much. I don't hold it against her because I think it's intrinsic. . . . I think it's part of the fabric of being any Jew is that we'll give this up and we'll do this and that, but then we stop because otherwise we'll disappear.

Although he takes down the tree willingly for Lynda's mother, he has more difficulty accepting doing this for their Jewish peers.

The tree will come down the first time we will have Jewish visitors. So if it's three days 'till somebody's coming over the tree will stay up for three days. Somebody's coming over Boxing Day-the tree will go down before then. . . . Lynda wants the tree taken down for our contemporaries. . . and I'm thinking [pfff!]. I mean they're raised the same way we are they're not going to come in here and become judgmental of us. . . . Lynda believes that they will. That they will come in and be hurt like her mother would be. . . . She's getting older and she's turning back to her roots and she is becoming like her mother. Her mother would be very uncomfortable with the tree and would be hurt by the presence of the tree and Lynda is becoming more like that each year.

Richard recognized that it is Lynda herself that has become increasingly uncomfortable with having a Christmas tree over the years. This example sheds light on the need for continual dialogue through the life cycle as individual needs, religious identification, and boundaries change with the ebb and flow of time.

Finances: Commitment at What Price?

Several discussed the importance of financial negotiations in order to manage the costs of supporting one or both of their religious causes and charities. Because Paul practiced tithing prior to meeting Rita, when they

married they needed to negotiate his desire to support both traditions financially:

Initially she was reluctant to [tithe], she thought I was giving away too much money. So I said "well it's written in the Bible as a duty to be generous". Then . . . I think it was a United-Jewish appeal that somebody made the pitch that generosity is also a Jewish supposed to be a Jewish trait so she realized then that she'll try it. . . . I said we should be equally generous to Jewish causes as well. . . . So what we do is half of our combined income I get to distribute to charities and the Church and half the income she gets to distribute. . . . As a self-professed Atheist she wasn't doing that before.

Although Richard was initially surprised at the costs of a formal Jewish education, he was pleased that his children were receiving an excellent education and he was grateful that he was able to afford it: "I've been fortunate because I've earned enough to be able to do that without feeling embittered about it. The Talmud Torah education's worth every penny and double." He "didn't begrudge" the cost of expensive bat-mitzvahs for his children, recognizing how important it is for his wife and sons.

Both Christine and Sam donate to their respective charities and houses of worship. Christine was uncomfortable with the mandatory synagogue dues that contrasted with the voluntary donations accepted by the church:

If I tell [Gentile] people that they charge dues to belong [at synagogue] they think I'm making it up! They've never heard of such a thing [laughing]! . . . I just was blown away! And I thought "that's outrageous! What do the poor people do?" . . . I guess there's some kind of arrangement whereby you can sort of plead poverty, but, you know, how humiliating.

Since Sam is supportive of her charities and Christmas expenses, however, she is also accepting of his contributions and synagogue dues:

I just give to the causes that I believe in. Certainly they're not his . . . He's more concerned with Jews for Peace in the Middle East, that sort of cause. . . . I try to support the Jesuit missions as much as I can. It doesn't total 10% really. Sam's congregation gets the lion's share. . . . It's a small congregation so the families who can are expected to double [their contribution]. The temple membership is very important to him and he

considers himself to be somebody who is a substantial participant and so he wouldn't be a slacker in any way. . . . I think he's able to accept [the cost of Christmas] without reservations. It's expensive you know. I complain about his [synagogue] dues, so he can complain about my Christmas list [laughing]. It's really expensive.

When Paul's Jewish wife, Rita shared Christine's concerns about mandatory synagogue membership, he tried to convince her to support the synagogue: "I encouraged Rita to buy a membership. I said 'I'll even take you to shul* if you want', but she thought that it was a little steep and disliked the principle of being forced into it". Interestingly, Paul, an observant Anglican, and Rita, an atheist Jewess, ultimately joined an ultra orthodox synagogue where yearly dues were not mandatory. This creative compromise, unusual as it may seem, effectively fit the needs of this couple.

Theme: Moving Along the Insider-Outsider Continuum

Periodic feelings of being outsiders in the context of their Jewish family, friends, or communities were apparent. Part of the outsider experience is recognizing the strong identity that Jewish people often have, whether it be in a religious, cultural, ethnic, or historical sense. In certain situations, some felt like strangers in the midst of a tight knit Jewish community with its explicit and implicit norms, rules, and world view.

Gradually, several became more like insiders through the passage of time and through active participation in the Jewish community. Several felt their lives had been enriched by this connection. There was often a trade-off with respect to feeling like insiders in one community. Some felt more like outsiders with their Gentile communities as a by-product of becoming insiders within Jewish society. Over time, several internalized insider experiences associated with being part of a minority group--vigilance, vulnerability, and, fear.

Despite gaining insider status, however, they were occasionally reminded of being outsiders. This was often attributed to cultural and historical origins, as opposed to religious ones. Consequently, some felt that they would never feel completely like insiders even if they chose to convert.

Recognizing the Insider Connection

Part of feeling like an outsider is recognizing the insider circle of the Jewish community. Participants recognized this strong connection, and in several cases, their partners' intrinsic identities as Jews. Most identified the connection between religion, culture, ethnicity, and community inherent in Judaism as distinct from their own traditions. As Paul shared: "There are great attractions to Judaism in the sense of community, the sense of belonging that no other ethnic group has". Richard described his feeling of awe with respect to the connection that Jewish people often feel. Although he accepts his wife's allegiance to her faith and culture, he does not feel this connection personally, despite being married for over 20 years:

It became obvious to me . . . that her Jewishness was very important to her. And genuinely, like intrinsically it was a part of her. Which is something that I still can't understand. The intrinsic devotion to the culture and the religion and to the people. Because if you don't have it you don't you can't ever understand it. . . . If I convert or if I stay married fifty years or whatever, I will never understand. . . . the strength of the . . . attachment to being Jewish. . . . There's no analogy in the Gentile world.

Echoing Richard's sentiments, Trent recognizes his wife's identification as a Jewess, despite the fact that she is not strongly observant:

I think that the bonds that the Jewish community seems to have are stronger amongst them than the bonds of the Protestant. . . . I don't think that we focus on religion as part of our culture quite as much. . . . The Jewish people tie their culture very close to their religious beliefs as far as I can follow and that's sort of who they are. Whereas if you are Protestant you don't really consider yourself to be Protestant--you're a Canadian. . . . Whereas if you ask. . . . Is she Canadian? No, she's Jewish, she happens to be Canadian as well. . . . They very much have that strength of identity.

Despite the fact that Christine is an observant Catholic who supports the church through her attendance, financial support, and volunteer efforts for social justice causes, she recognized that her connection with Catholicism is based on faith and religious identity as opposed to her connection to the Catholic community:

You just go to Mass and come home. That's really Catholicism. . . . I don't really have a Catholic community. You just go to a church with about 5,000 members on Sunday. Pick a Mass, any Mass and just go sit any old place and leave right away and that's it. Unless you join a committee you don't really have any sense of Catholic community or if you join a prayer group or a bible study group or something like that. I haven't and so I don't have a Catholic community as such. I may have some friends who happen to be Catholic, but they don't necessarily go to my Parish or anything. I actually don't know a single soul in my Parish and I didn't know anyone in my last Parish either.

Sue, like other participants, noticed the tendency for the Jewish community to be close knit, despite their interaction with Gentiles:

The community seems to be sort of closed. . . . The golden ghetto of the West-end [is]. . . closed to an extent, but it can't be closed entirely because it's so small. . . People are going to do business. . . so it can't be a really closed community, and for almost all my friends I'm not their only Christian friend. I mean they must have many other Christian acquaintances and friends. Although a lot of their friends would probably be Jewish or they would try to.

Sue recognized that she and other Gentiles were given entry to a tightly connected and protective group.

Stranger in the Midst

Participants described periodic experiences of feeling like outsiders vis a vis the Jewish community. This feeling was extremely subtle in some cases, whereas in others it was strongly felt. Often there was an interplay between external and internal cues that generated outsider experiences. Internally generated feelings were often interpreted in an intellectual fashion, by recognizing, for example, that as the only Gentile in a gathering of Jewish people, they were bound to feel different from the group in some way. In

contrast, when they were explicitly identified as being different or treated as outsiders by Jewish people, they often felt greater discomfort.

Despite being warmly welcomed by the Jewish community, Dan felt awkward at first, unfamiliar with Jewish traditions and unsure of what to expect in Jewish gatherings. His outsider feelings were internally generated in the context of new and foreign traditions:

I've always been welcomed. . . but at times it felt awkward going. It wasn't for them seeing me as an outsider coming there. It was for me being an outsider coming. . . . I think a lot of it was not knowing what to expect. It was foreign to me.

Similarly, Trent described internal feelings of being a "stranger" or "intruder" while being in synagogue. In some cases, differing interests associated with cultural backgrounds triggered internal feelings of boredom or discomfort. Despite the fact that he enjoys being involved with an educated, socially mobile, "cultured" Jewish community, at times Richard struggles to find common ground with Jewish males, who typically do not share his love for the outdoors:

All our friends are Jewish. . . . I don't think we know any intermarried couples. I am often the only Gentile in a room of thirty people or forty people. . . . Lynda has the duty, obligation, or joy of picking our friends, and, the only resistance I will have is if they are extraordinarily urban. I find it difficult to spend an evening with extraordinarily urban people. . . . Urban means no exposure to anything outside of the city. . . . If in a group of men they will all talk business and only business. They will not talk sports or fishing or hunting or anything except business. They won't even talk politics. They won't even talk religion. It's only business. . . . And I wasn't raised in a house like that and I find it difficult to keep myself occupied. There was a while when our circle of friends--all the men were like that. . . . I had to say, "Look we can't go out with these men". . . . [because] I'd . . . end up sitting with all the women! And after a while, the guys. . . . would always say, "Are you with the women again?" And I'd be sitting there kind of quietly just listening to the women talk 'cause there was a bigger spectrum of topics.

Similarly, although Trent felt generally comfortable in social situations, when a heated conversation about Judaism surfaced with his wife's Jewish friends, he felt uncomfortable, not knowing what to say:

We were invited over to a dinner party where. . . . I was the only non-Jew. These were some friends of Marnie's. . . . The fellow who invited us over was [in the same business] . . . so he and I had something in common. When you are talking about a lot of things it doesn't matter who you are. But they did get into at one point some religious discussion because one of the ladies there was rather [pause] intense is how I would put it. You know that was a bit uncomfortable because I didn't really follow what they were talking about and I didn't particularly want to get involved in it. But other than that we had a good time.

Trent's description puts the outsider experience into context. It is often fleeting, a momentary experience of feeling uncomfortable, unsure, or vulnerable.

Similarly, when Sue went on a tour to Israel with her husband and their Jewish friends, her insider experience was suddenly shaken when an Israeli bus driver identified her as a Gentile. At that moment, Sue was singled out and reminded that she was different from the group in some intangible way:

The bus driver said "she's not Jewish is she?" to my husband. And I'm thinking, What? It's like neon flashing! . . . How can you tell? I mean what difference is there? I don't know that there is a difference, but obviously there was something that they pick up on.

In Sue's example, outsider feelings were externally generated when she was identified as being Gentile. In contrast, previous examples illustrate outsider experiences that are more internally generated as a by-product of being a minority in Jewish gatherings.

In many cases, feeling like an outsider was generated by an interplay between internal and external cues. Richard, for example, described feeling momentarily self-conscious in synagogue when his selective participation in religious rituals illuminated his identity as an outsider. His choice to limit his participation and his subsequent outsider experience were both internally and externally generated. Not only did he believe it was improper to participate fully because he is not Jewish (an internal cue), but also, he was concerned that he would offend Jewish congregants if he participated in certain rituals (external cue). When he became aware of Jewish congregants noticing his restricted

participation (external cue), his outsider experience (internal cue) was momentarily apparent:

I don't pass the Torah and I don't kiss the Torah when it comes around. Once in a while I can tell by the body language that [Jewish congregants are thinking] 'Uh, you're an outsider', but so small that I think, 'Wow, that's a lot of control for you to be just that little annoyed at the fact that I'm not Jewish.' I've never had any overt prejudice.

Generally speaking, participants like Richard felt most uncomfortable when their outsider status was highlighted externally. Although internal feelings were uncomfortable at times, they could be dealt with privately. In contrast, feeling exposed as being different in a largely Jewish setting was more unsettling:

People 70 years old 75 years old can make me feel very uncomfortable but I understand they're simply the way I'm going to be in 25 years and so I'm very forgiving of it. . . . Old people . . . can say things or do things or they'll . . . say it so you can overhear it. That's very uncomfortable. . . . I don't wear a tallit* because I haven't been bar-mitzvahed and so when I'm offered one at the shul I say "No, I've not been bar-mitzvahed" and generally speaking they understand what I'm saying. Because I don't want to announce as I bring my wife and my kids in that "I'M NOT JEWISH! I WILL NOT BE WEARING THAT, ATTENTION YOU ALL!" So, I say "I've not been Bar-mitzvahed" and nine out of ten times it clicks and they say "Well, just go sit over there". But there's the odd time where I've got, usually an old man, walking around behind me trying to get me to put this tallit on. And I'm trying to dodge the guy and I can't get away. So yeah the generational gap that's a problem.

Several participants like Richard used humor to describe, cope with, and deflect these uncomfortable and often ironic experiences.

Interestingly, Sue was periodically reminded of her outsider status by well-meaning Jewish friends whose repeated explanations of Jewish traditions became redundant over the course of twenty years:

Most of my friends have a tendency to over-explain things. . . that I already know. It's like having a boss who always tells you "I would like you to do this now" and you've been doing it for 20 years. It's enough already that you will remember it. . . . It's like somebody after all this time is explaining what Hanukkah is. It's like, okay, you don't have to do this anymore. I do know or understand. Or somebody explaining a Yiddish expression that I've heard a million times. Okay, I understand that too. It's very sweet on their part. It's an acknowledgment . . . that they know

that I'm different and they want to include me, and so I take it in that way. But every once in a while it's like oh, it's not necessary anymore.

Sue's example illustrates the paradox of mentorship. Her friends' well-meaning attempts to be inclusive inadvertently made her feel somewhat patronized or seen as different periodically.

Bessie felt warmly accepted by her Jewish friends in private company, however, she felt that her friends became more distant at synagogue. She believed they did not want to associate too closely with a Gentile in Jewish settings for fear of losing status in their Jewish circles:

Our friends accepted me. I've known these people for 25 years, but when you go to functions at the Synagogue there seems to be an alignment of--there's a difference in them. Like so [they're] not seen associating with an untouchable. . . because. . . they may not be welcomed into their little clique. . . . If you met on the street or you come to their home or anything like that you get a hug, you know, like friends. But when they're a lot of Jewish people in a Jewish setting then there's not the same warmth that comes even though. . . . There's not the same openness to you and ease with you as what there is normally.

Richard also believed that his Jewish friends were somewhat restrained in his company. Although he believed that his Gentile background was likely responsible for this, he attributed his friends' behavior differently than Bessie. Richard felt that his Jewish friends were simply more comfortable 'letting their hair down' when among other Jewish people:

I think they would allow themselves to be more caricaturish. . . about themselves. . . . They'd be more self-deprecating, more shtick [playful Jewish humor], more schlock if I wasn't there. I only know that because when you're at a party and you're in one room and everybody is in the other room and you go through the doorway and see them and walk in and it stops or changes. So I think they would be more willing to sort of play in the sandbox like they'd be all in the sandbox playing with each other. . . . If I come in. . . . they do act differently which is understandable because I'm a stranger. That wouldn't change if I converted. . . I wouldn't expect it to change.

The latter examples illustrate how the meaning of being an outsider is different depending on the individual and circumstance. The outsider experience for

Bessie was pejorative, making her feel like an 'untouchable' in certain contexts. For others, feeling like an outsider was not associated with being inferior. Rather, it was a recognition of either feeling different internally or being seen as different by others.

Generalized Identity and Restricted Access

Outsider status was manifest occasionally when participants perceived that their identity vis a vis the Jewish community was as the "Gentile spouse" rather than as individuals. Christine felt that she is "well treated" by the Jewish community and is "not marginalized in any way". At the same time, she tentatively acknowledged that, at times, her identity in the Jewish community is somewhat limited:

No one has made references to what I do on Sundays or that sort of thing. It's sort of disregarded or not really noted that I've been involved in a lot of social justice work. . . and a lot of different causes. . . . Between the two of us Sam of course is the person with the most status in that community because he contributes so much to the synagogue and I'm you know I'm his 'nice wife' [laughing] and 'she's Catholic or something' you know, I think that's the reputation.

Richard noticed that Jewish friends tended to assume that his tastes would coincide with their stereotypical beliefs of Gentiles. Richard responded to these generalizations with curiosity and humor:

Everybody pours my wine first. Everyone only asks me whether I want a beer. So there's a lot of generalizations going on even when I'm involved because they assume I'm going to drink. They assume I'm going to know the booze. I'm always the one who's asked to carve to hack meat up or take fish off the bones or all those things are generalizations that they don't see they're doing to me, but which are very obvious to me. . . . It happens all the time. . . . But [its] all at such a low level of teasing that one could never take offense at it. I don't ever [take offense] 'cause it's always such a low level and it's always the generalizations that I would expect to hear.

Most participants' outsider experiences were triggered through relationships with friends and community as opposed to through their spouses. In contrast, Bessie felt like an outsider when her husband told her that she

could not possibly understand his reaction to the Holocaust because she is not Jewish:

When there's a movie on about the Holocaust or something like that [he'd say] "you don't understand". We're the same age, he never went through anything like that and we all know of it. I mean you don't have to be Jewish to be horrified and ashamed of what went on or for any group of people who have been tortured and tormented and things. So you don't just have to be Jewish to understand. That is hurtful because to understand the horror against another human being you know you'd have to be a particular type of person or religion. . . . To me again it felt as though it was definitely hurtful but what basis did he have for saying that? I've never got an answer from him in regards to that. . . . I [felt] like an idiot that in fact you couldn't understand this because you were not Jewish. . . . That's what I felt in fact that I was not intelligent enough to understand this horror.

In this case, Bessie felt shut out and treated as inferior in the context of her marital relationship. In contrast to previous examples, Bessie experienced her outsider status as being hurtful.

In previous cases, attitudes and behaviors of Jewish spouses, family, or friends elicited a sense of being identified more generally as a Gentile, as opposed to being seen as an individual. In other cases however, participants themselves believed that as Gentiles, their understanding of Jewish issues was necessarily limited due to cultural and historical differences. Despite the fact that Richard has been involved in Jewish life for 20 years, he felt unqualified to teach his children about their Jewish identity:

If you convert you're not in it. . . . You can't feel it. . . . Even if you've never experienced it [personally] you can feel it [if you're born Jewish]. . . . I've said my children are Jewish. That's a fact. I would never pretend to be able to even have a glimmer of understanding of what that is and so it's necessary for their mother and their mother's side of the family to teach them. They are their elders, they are the ones who will pass along. . . traditions . . . and they can [teach them to] do whatever is necessary to be a good Jew.

In addition, Richard believed that as a non-Jew his right to express some of his opinions about Judaism should be restricted out of respect to Jewish people. He candidly shared his reluctance to comment on certain aspects of Jewish

traditions. When I encouraged him to express his opinions freely, he explained that he felt that it was wrong for him to do so as an outsider. He feared that his opinions and feelings might inadvertently be interpreted as being critical or disrespectful:

You can feel free to comment on what you don't like about Judaism because you paid your dues. You're Jewish. I . . . haven't paid my dues. I have no right to comment on this stuff. I feel um, very awkward about this because I haven't I haven't paid my dues to be able to be critical. I'm sitting here, a non-committed outsider, criticizing something that is not mine and that's not fair that's not right. I shouldn't be doing that. Um, so, I understand that you can empathize with the fact that I don't want to go to Friday night dinners all my life but there's a lot more significance to me saying it than there is to you saying it. . . . because [it might be interpreted that I] don't like the religion.

These examples shed light on internal and external messages regarding inclusion and exclusion. The hesitancy with which some of the experiences were articulated suggests the sensitive nature of these issues.

Threat to Jewish Survival

Many participants recognized that intermarriage was seen as a threat to survival by the Jewish community. Most participants indicated that they understood the community's concern and did not feel slighted by it. Having grown up surrounded by a Jewish community, Paul recognized that as an intermarried Gentile, he was perceived as a threat initially. Understanding this, Paul took the "cold polite" reception he initially received from the Jewish community in stride. He tried to understand the reaction from the insider perspective of the Jewish community:

First of all, the feeling [I got from the Jewish community originally] was cold. I think in more recent years they see that I'm not a threat but I'm actually on their side. That I'm encouraging Rita to take part in Jewish life. . . . I took it in stride because I knew where it was coming from. . . . The fear of assimilation. I was seen as taking somebody out of the community and I felt that they didn't understand that we'd really be more involved. I think I'm more accepted now because I'm willing to work for Jewish causes. . . . I think at first there was a bit of resentment, you know sort of cold politeness towards me until I guess after we were married.

Then I started helping Rita out with [charity] bingo and I'm one of the few husbands actually that does show up for that. The [charity] ladies just love me.

Paul was pleased, when over time, his name was included with his wife's on mailed invitations for Jewish events. This, for him, was a sign of acceptance and inclusion. The irony in this case is that Paul's wife has become far more observant as a Jewess subsequent to her intermarriage with Paul. In addition, Paul himself contributes a great deal to the Jewish community through volunteer work and charitable contributions.

Like Paul, Sue tried not to take negative comments about intermarriage personally. Instead she tried to understand the concern from the Jewish community's perspective:

The first time that somebody said something to me about the fact that it was kind of sad that David married me because that was one less Jewish person was going to be in the world I remember being surprised that they felt that way you know because it was a friend who said it. But it wasn't directed at me you know it was very sort of general comment and since then. . . . that issue has come up a lot. . . . Technically you'd think that would be a really hard thing for me but it actually didn't bother me. . . I don't take it personally. I think I try and look at it from the point of view that. . . these people are looking at a decreasing number of. . . participating Jewish people in North America because assimilation has been so successful.

In the process of empathizing with concerns of the Jewish community, occasionally, Sue feels a sense of guilt about intermarrying:

Every once in a while. . . you sometimes wonder if maybe they're right. Maybe you have done something wrong. Maybe you shouldn't have taken somebody who would've made Jewish children out of the population. . . . [I feel] a little bit [of guilt] sometimes. But understanding where they're coming from and knowing that it's not directed at you personally. It's just something you wonder about.

Bessie's experience of the intermarital controversy was far more salient. For her, an article in a Jewish newspaper citing intermarriage as a plight for Jewish survival was extremely hurtful and personal:

I should have kept [the article] but it annoyed me so much that I destroyed it because I couldn't believe that a rabbi would write this. It was in a Jewish paper. . . . it was about intermarriage, that it was a blight and the growing numbers and that we had to destroy this. Like it was really hate literature. I thought how could you possibly win and influence people to believe in you. . . when you put down other ordinary people? I mean and you cry discrimination. . . because you're Jewish? Does it not happen because of how you've treated someone else? . . . You feel as though you're nothing--an untouchable. In effect you're so much beneath the Jewish people and it's really a little hard to take.

For Bessie, the position against intermarriage was tantamount to discrimination. This, for her, was another message that, as a Gentile, she was inferior and ultimately unwelcome in the Jewish community.

Gaining Insider Status

Insider status in the Jewish community was gradually attained through the passage of time and through active participation in the Jewish community. When Sue joined a Jewish women's organization, she found that she made close friendships and enjoyed her participation tremendously. Nevertheless, as she became more involved with the group, Sue had an uneasy feeling that she might be rejected due to the fact that she was not Jewish:

The first three years I was a little nervous that you know maybe something would slip you know somebody would say "well you don't belong" or "how dare you" and "how can you run for this office when you're not even Jewish". I kind of said to people "is it a problem?" and people would say "is what a problem?" I felt a little bit I thought it would be better if it was up front. Can you imagine if you're a president of an organization and someone stands up in a full meeting and goes [loudly] "AND SHE'S NOT EVEN JEWISH!" [laughing]. You go "Oh my G-d". I thought let's find out if this is going to happen first. But it wasn't and it never did.

Over time, her fears were abated and she regarded her new found friends as "soul mates" whom she cared for deeply and respected. In turn, Sue was treated as a full-fledged member of the group: "They treat me like I think as if I were Jewish even though they are aware that I'm not. Somehow that's kind of gotten lost in the shuffle".

Ironically, participants' feelings of being outsiders were also elicited at times when Jewish friends endowed them with insider status over time, treating them as a full-fledged members. Sue laughed wholeheartedly as she recounted a story illuminating how an elderly Jewish woman literally forgot that she was Gentile:

This elderly lady who I'm extremely fond of was at my house for a meeting, and walked into the study and was looking at the family pictures on the wall and she said to me "You know your father doesn't look Jewish". [I thought] 'And the rest of them do? [laughing]'. This is news! I love it, I love it! I said "He's not". She thought about it for a little while and said "You're right--he wouldn't be". She knew . . . [I wasn't Jewish] it was just so funny.

For the most part Sue experienced her acceptance into the Jewish community as a privilege and honor. Yet, she recognized that maintaining her insider status required that she downplay her own traditions. In order to maintain insider status with friends and to avoid making her husband feel uncomfortable, Sue chose not to celebrate Christmas in her home:

The people that I know that are my friends who know me well most of them treat me as if I had [converted]. . . . I've been invited to many Rosh Hashanah parties and I've been invited to seders and so forth and yet I would never invite them to a Christmas party. . . . If that makes any sense. It's like they feel okay with me coming to them. I'm not sure if they would feel comfortable if all of a sudden I decided to have a Christmas party and invited them. I think it might be very awkward, so I've never done that. I thought about it once. . . . But I kind of have this feeling, that it wouldn't be right for me to do it. . . . It wouldn't be comfortable. I know David wouldn't be comfortable with that and it would change the way they looked at me I think, perhaps. In a little way. Not that they don't know already [that I'm not Jewish] because they do, but they tend to forget about it if you are comfortable with somebody.

Sue was aware that drawing attention to her Gentile traditions would subtly change the perception of her as an insider.

Bessie's desire to please her mother-in-law and perhaps to gain her approval often resulted in her sacrificing her own needs. Despite her repeated efforts, she never felt fully accepted by her mother-in-law:

The influence [of family] is there and you're always trying to please rather than taking yourself into consideration. Always wanting to be accepted for who you are. . . . You portray yourself differently, you know? I believe you are not true to yourself. But you should be strong enough to be able to just be yourself rather than try to please someone else simply because you are not a religion they want you to be.

In contrast, to her relationship with her mother-in-law, Bessie often felt accepted by her Jewish friends. In fact, her friends felt so comfortable with her, that they openly shared with her their disapproval of their children's intermarrying. Ironically, being treated as an insider inadvertently caused her to feel personally criticized:

You know they forget that you are a Gentile. . . . I don't want to make an issue of it but it is pretty hurtful. I mean you should realize that's exactly who I am. . . . There again I feel how did they not know? How did they not know how I would feel when they in fact are running down the men or the women their own children have picked because they're not of the same faith? . . . That's the one thing I never understood where faith can be the divider regardless of the person that you are and can be used as an excuse that you're no good.

Sue and Bessie's reactions illustrate how different people, depending on their personalities, backgrounds, and individual needs react differently to similar situations.

Several participants indicated that as they became more involved and gained insider status with the Jewish community, they felt more like outsiders with respect to their Gentile communities. Dan's desire to feel like an insider in his future family ignited his interest in the possibility of converting to Judaism:

[I've been thinking of converting] I would say in the last year. A lot of it has to do with eventually Farrah and I will have children and I want our children to be brought up Jewish and she does too and I want to be a part of it and I want to be able to answer questions when my child asks me. . . . The main thing I feel is I want my kids to be raised Jewish and if I wasn't Jewish then maybe I would be an outsider to my family. Do you know what I mean?

Both Dan and Richard commented that marrying a Jewish spouse and moving away from the religion of their childhood created distance between themselves

and their families of origin. At the same time, they both received support and positive reinforcement from their spouses' Jewish families. Sue's experience of discrimination in her home town resulted in her feeling closer to her husband and Jewish people in general. At the same time, it distanced her both emotionally and physically from her own family and community. Threading through their stories is a trade-off of insider and outsider status. In choosing to be an insider in one tradition, they felt more like an outsider in another. Decisions to underplay their own traditions were also motivated in part by a desire to minimize differences, avoid friction, and be part of a group.

The Minority Lens

Loving a Jewish person sensitized some participants to the vulnerability that Jewish people often feel as a minority group. For these participants, seeing the world through a minority lens shifted their world view. This increased sensitivity developed through discussions with their partners, through active participation in the Jewish community, and in some cases, through first hand experience with anti-Semitism.

Several indicated that their Jewish spouses were particularly vigilant with respect to expressions or statements that they perceived as being potentially harmful to a minority group:

[My husband] pointed out expressions that people use that I never even thought about. . . . Just for example, somebody would say "oh I've been gypped" and he'd say "You must not say that. It's against the gypsies" and I'd go "Oh?". I'd think about this for a while and go "You know, you're right". It's just like there's a million things like that are out there. He was very sensitive to that . . . and I had never stopped to think about those things.

Some Jewish partners were particularly sensitive to any generalizations made by their spouses about Jewish people:

On occasion I will say something, I will stereotype her on occasion. . . and Lynda will become inflamed. I'll give you an example. . We [were

having a party] and had to decide what sort of beer to get. And I said, "We will get Corona, and we will get Coors Light and we will get Labatts Light. And we will have no other beer". And she says, "How can you say this?" And I said, "Because I've watched the drinking habits of Jewish men and they will drink Corona and Coors Light and Labatts Light and they will drink nothing else." That was a source of much--that's as much generalization or prejudice as I have in myself. And so I guess it inflames Lynda because she never hears anything more from me. But she was particularly angered by the fact that I generalize as I did.

Interestingly, although Richard responded to Gentile stereotypes made by Jewish people lightheartedly, he was vigilant about refraining from making generalizations about Jewish life: "Your language becomes very important and you begin to sort your language out".

Through his volunteering, Paul became sensitized to the vulnerability that some Jewish people feel when they are identified as being Jewish to the Gentile strangers:

This Christmas we worked for the Haddassah. They had the gift wrap at a shopping mall and it's a lot of fun. Actually I think it's sort of a nice thing that these ladies do for the Christian community so I support it and what not. So I was sitting there wrapping and somebody came up to me and said "What is this in support of?" So I said "it's in support of Haddassah Wizo" and he says "What's that?" So I said "It's a Jewish women's service organization you know that kind of thing, the Lions or that". [and he said] "Oh it's a Jewish group, Happy Hanukkah". and walked off. Then a little while later somebody walked up to a lady who had just come on duty and she had the same question "what's this in support of?" So she said again "It's a Jewish women's organization". Another lady [volunteer], her friend said "don't say Jewish so loud". . . . She said, "You'll never know what they'll think". So I turned around and I said, "I just answered that question the same way and the fellow wished me a Happy Hanukkah" and they were both amazed. . . . Jews in Edmonton don't want to make a big thing of being Jewish.

For Paul, the experience sensitized him to the fear of prejudice associated with being part of a minority group.

Some experienced feelings of being different or vulnerable in the context of Gentile society due to their connection with their Jewish spouses. Paul, along with several participants, occasionally wondered privately whether anti-

Semitism was underlying a situation that either they themselves or their partner faced. These suspicions were not extreme or all encompassing, but at times, were subtle, niggling, or fleeting thoughts. For example, at times, if a person does not like him, Paul privately wonders if they might be anti-Semitic:

I don't make any secret of the fact that I'm married to someone Jewish. I don't make a secret of the fact that I work for Jewish causes. You know when I'm with Jews I don't make any secret of the fact that we go to church on Sunday. It's just so damn polite these days because people don't want to be politically incorrect. You always run across people who for some reason don't like you. . . and you can't put your finger on why. I don't know maybe. Maybe that's why.

Some described moments of insecurity associated with being part of a minority. As noted earlier, Richard had fears early on in his relationship, when he was warned by friends that intermarrying might adversely affect his career. Christine indicated that occasionally she feels somewhat self-conscious when she notices that she is being identified as a Jewess:

Sometimes I give my last name, which is a Jewish sounding name, and you see people looking to see how Jewish you look? Have you ever experienced that? Do you know what I'm talking about? . . . You just know it must be something that people experience. There's an assumption that you're Jewish.

Some participants reported having overheard or having been the recipient of anti-Semitic comments. Paul indicated that he had corrected Gentile people who claimed that the Holocaust never happened. Sue experienced the force of firsthand discrimination in her home town. Through her experiences, she saw glimpses of the world through a minority lens. Sue's husband was not terribly surprised when they faced anti-Semitism. In contrast, Sue was totally unprepared for the discrimination they encountered. Sue described how this traumatic experience altered her world view:

I think being intermarried for me it taught me a lot to look through someone else's eyes, you know. It's one thing when you are part of the majority and nothing is ever initiated and you are never called upon to take a stand one way or the other but it's another thing when suddenly

you're sort of on the other side of the fence. . . . I think it just made me aware that when my husband was on the receiving end and nobody would stand up for him and he was all by himself. He's a really strong man and he was all by himself and nobody would sort of stand up with him. You know what I mean? That really hurt. . . . I just felt that I couldn't trust even my own family. You feel like if the chips were really down who would come and stand by you?

This experience initially made Sue feel abandoned, an outsider in her own community.

In contrast, Richard had not personally experienced overt discrimination due to his intermarriage. During times of political unrest in the Middle East, however, he became concerned when the security of his daughters' parochial school was brought into question. The strong commitment of his wife and children to remain in their school ultimately persuaded him to support their decision:

When things heated up in the Middle East, and there were. . . bombings going on. . . I felt uncomfortable about the kids being in Talmud Torah for their safety. Lynda was committed to it. The kids were committed to it, and they were prepared to run the danger, whatever, risk to be in an identifiable Jewish school. . . . I wasn't so committed. I thought well this is really kinda crazy. To put them in a school where my children might be harmed simply because they're Jewish and simply because . . . some nut decides to do something. I [don't] feel physical danger as a result of the oppression the Jews have experienced over time. . . but I feel it for my kids. . . . We were able to survive that because Lynda was committed to it. She simply said, "Lookit. This has been going on for thousands of years, and I'm not walking away from this. We're doing it. The kids are staying. And I don't like it either. And it would tear my heart out if something happened but they're staying". And I accepted that because I could feel the commitment. I could feel how strongly she was committed. . . . That was something that was quite profound. . . . The fear of the danger to the children.

Sue's vivid description of a disturbing incident during a trip to Israel further exemplifies the impact that of being targeted as a member of a minority:

Being a Christian with a Jewish tour, something really weird and spooky happened [in the old city]. . . . I sort of wandered off on my own. . . . and. . . without realizing it. . . I had crossed into the Christian section. . . and this fellow came out of a store and. . . said "Are you Christian?" and I just sort of said "Yeah" and. . . he's so nice to me, right? Really friendly. . . . Then

we went by there again but now I'm with a group of people who are Jewish with a Jewish tour guide. . . and the look on his face was hate. . . it was so weird. . . . And then . . . as we walked down the street to the [Wailing] Wall and it's mostly Palestinians in those shops. . . it was very tense. . . and they're. . . staring and saying things. . . . I was busy looking at the ground. . . I was just so upset and I kept saying to . . . my friends. . . . "They hate us". and they go "Yeah, so?" And I thought, "You live with this and it doesn't bother you?" . . . I've never felt so much intense dislike being focused on me for no reason. . . . And for a person who has never been subjected to that it is really difficult. It is really hard. . . . All the people I was with had such a strong. . . sense of identity with that city and they [would] . . kiss the ground [and say] "This is home. This is wonderful". And I'm thinking "This is not home. This is not me. . . I don't belong here at all".

This profound experience made Sue feel displaced on a number of levels. Her sense of safety was challenged and her experience of being hated based on her group membership was traumatic for her. Unlike her husband and friends who were accustomed to prejudice and who felt safe as a majority in their Jewish homeland, Sue felt displaced, unsafe, and unwelcome. Her experience was intensified since she felt as if she was between two worlds. She felt a sense of being alone amongst her husband and friends. Yet, she did not feel part of the Gentile community.

Summary

Overall, religious and cultural issues were not central to marriages. Participants shared more commonalities with their spouses than differences, and indicated that their marital satisfaction was not dependent on religious or cultural homogeneity.

As external influences such as parents, families, friends, and communities became apparent, couples benefited from support and also faced adversity. Those who were unfamiliar with Jewish traditions 'learned the ropes' through experience, study, and mentorship. Key life cycle milestones and holidays required that religious and cultural participation be negotiated. Most couples indicated that although intermarrying required them to make some

compromises, this was to be expected in any marriage. Child rearing issues were identified as being potentially challenging, requiring particular attention, flexibility, and compromise. Participants' ability to cope with intermarital challenges was often related to the overall functioning of their marital relationships, rather than to the degree of their religious affiliation.

Threading through many stories were experiences of being both insiders and outsiders. Some felt that over time they were included as part of the Jewish community. Despite this, both internal and external cues periodically reminded them of their outsider status. In one person's experience, religious differences were ultimately viewed as being divisive. In other cases, being insiders in the Jewish community made them feel more like outsiders in their Gentile communities. Being part of the Jewish community sensitized some to a minority world view. Ultimately, most felt their intermarriages had enriched their lives, providing invaluable opportunities for discovery, growth, and learning.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The goal of this research was to gain an understanding of Jewish-Gentile marriage from the perspective of Gentile spouses living in Edmonton. As Jewish-Gentile intermarital rates rise in Canada, there is a growing need for research to address relevant marital issues pertaining to these couples. Because the majority of the literature on Jewish-Gentile marriage has focused on Jewish issues in the United States, the purpose of this research was to use a phenomenological methodology (Colaizzi, 1978) to uncover the experiences of Gentile people married to Jewish people and living in Edmonton, Canada.

Seven Gentile spouses, three females and four males, who were currently living in Edmonton and married to Jewish people, participated in two open-ended interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to elicit rich descriptions of meaning from people with diverse marital experiences. Six of the seven participants described their relationships as being fulfilling, whereas one of the females interviewed, was separated from her husband. Participants had Catholic, Anglican, United Church, and Mormon backgrounds. Some were strongly observant in their faiths, whereas others were not. Each person brought with them a unique story.

Through the process of thematic reduction described by Colaizzi (1978), five main themes were uncovered which represent the common experiences of intermarriage from the perspective of the seven participants. Phenomenology seeks to understand and describe, rather than to predict or control. Accordingly, these experiences were drawn from a purposive sample of people, that is, people closest to the experience of intermarriage, who were willing and able to share their stories. As such, the findings presented in no way represent the experiences of all

intermarried couples. The goal instead has been to identify common underlying themes generated by the people interviewed.

In some cases, themes strongly represent the experience of all participants, whereas in others, the themes are reflective of the majority. The reader must ultimately judge the validity of the findings based on the described methodology, the data provided, and the supporting literature. Furthermore, readers have been made aware of the presuppositions that I, as a researcher, have attempted to set aside as much as possible, rather than allowing them to override participants' stories.

This chapter will review the main findings of the study in the context of the relevant literature, primarily in the area of marriage, intermarriage, and counselling. Literature from social psychology pertaining to ethnic relations will be included selectively when appropriate.

The Findings in Context

The five main findings and their respective 23 sub-themes are illustrated in Figure 1 (p. 157). The figure reflects the experience of intermarriage as described by participants and as interpreted using a phenomenological methodology (Colaizzi, 1978). Metaphorically, the figure can be viewed as a three dimensional bubble. The backdrop of participants' intermarital experiences is their relationships with their spouses. Therefore, the first theme, "Marrying a Person, Not a Religion" is the context for the remaining four themes: "Discovering That Marriage is More than You and Me", "Learning the Ropes", "Navigating Through the Life Cycle", and "Moving Along The Insider-Outsider Continuum".

Rather than being distinct, all five themes overlap and are interconnected in a fluid way. At present, the colors of the bubble paint a vivid picture, with all five themes illuminated brightly. In reality, however, during participants' day to day

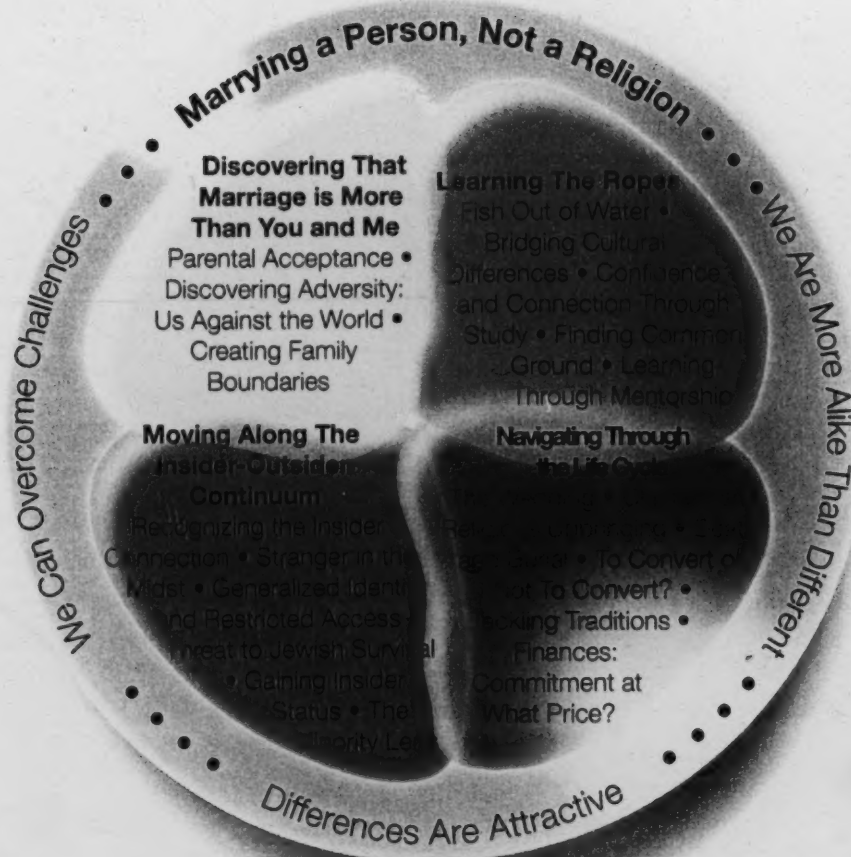


Figure 1. Inside intermarriage: The experience of Gentile people married to Jewish spouses.

lives, religious and cultural differences were often not salient. For much of participants' married lives, we might imagine that the colors of the four center themes would be muted, leaving the underlying hue of the theme "Marrying a Person, Not a Religion" to penetrate through and be most visible. During other times, when religious or cultural issues surfaced, the colors of the inner four themes would become more vibrant.

Because a bubble is three dimensional, we are unable to see substantial portions of it. If we were to hold the bubble in our hands and turn it around, looking to the top, the bottom, and the side presently hidden, we would see many other facets of participants' marriages that were not investigated in this research. In other words, participants described what it was like being married to a person who is Jewish; they did not share the entirety of their marital experiences. Although there is undoubtedly an overlap between religion, culture, and marital dynamics, participants did not define their marriages as intermarriages. Rather, religious and cultural differences were but one facet of their relationships.

In addition, the bubble does not exist in a vacuum. These experiences occur in the context of individual personalities and backgrounds, interpersonal relationships, religious, cultural, historical, and societal influences. This is consistent with models of family functioning that assert that relationships do not exist in isolation, but rather, they are impacted by interconnected individuals, families, cultures, and environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; McGoldrick et al., 1993). Finally, the bubble is not static, but floats through time and space. As such it is impacted by the passage of time, by personal changes, and by environments, relationships, and experiences encountered along the way.

Integration with the Literature

Given the breadth of the experiences described by participants, it is beyond the scope of this discussion to explore all of the findings in depth. Instead, this

section will integrate with the literature, four salient, overlapping dimensions described within the five second order themes: a) intermarriage as marriage, b) coping with external forces, c) life cycle issues, and d) insider-outsider experiences:

Intermarriage as Marriage: Intermarriage is but one kind of marriage. Although there are hypotheses that the strength of religious affiliation will negatively impact marital stability, for these participants, religion and culture were part of a larger set of interrelated factors that contributed to the overall experience of marriage.

Coping with External forces: Participants described particular hurdles due to external opposition from rabbinical authorities, families, friends, or communities. The degree to which this impacted participants and their spouses, again was dependent on a number of interconnected factors.

Life cycle issues: Participants described some challenges during life cycle phases. The life cycle model, commonly used to conceptualize marriage generally and intermarriage specifically, is a double edged sword. The model's strength lies in its effective delineation of some key life cycle issues that couples may undergo through their married lives. Its weakness, however, is in its linear approach that may not fully illuminate the experience of intermarriage from an insider's perspective. Rather, it may inadvertently set standards that couples 'should' or 'need to' undergo in order to develop satisfying relationships. In addition, the adapted interfaith life cycle model may not adequately address gender issues pertaining to the experiences of those in Jewish-Gentile marriages. Intermarriage, as described by participants was an unfolding story. Like most life stories, the experiences did not all emerge in a linear or predictable fashion.

Insider-outsider experiences: Participants described nuances of insider-outsider experiences with respect to their relationships with spouses, families, and communities. They described a process of becoming more of insiders vis a vis the Jewish community over time. In some cases, becoming an insider in one community, meant feeling more like an outsider in another. Compromises and conversion contemplation were in some cases motivated by a desire to be supportive of spouses and to be an insider within their families. Some indicated that they would never feel the sense of tribal Jewish identity that Jewish people often feel, and as such, to some extent, would always be an outsider.

Intermarriage as Marriage

We need to move beyond the myth that one type of family is the paragon of virtue to be emulated by all families and that all other families are inherently deficient. . . . As researchers and clinicians are finding, different structural arrangements are potentially workable--none is inherently healthy

or pathological. It is not family form, but rather family processes--the quality of family relationships--that make the difference. (Walsh, 1993, p. 19)

Intermarriage is one kind of marriage. Because no two people are alike, the joining of individuals in any marriage necessarily requires the integration of two systems of meaning (McGoldrick et al., 1993). Consistent with Walsh's (1993) review of important factors for healthy marital and family functioning, it was important for couples in this study to establish communicative relationships based on love, trust, respect, and acceptance. In one case, when these aspects were not in place, marital challenges became evident, and religious and cultural differences were experienced as being divisive. Ultimately, this couple separated. Although other participants acknowledged a number of religious and cultural challenges, overall, they felt that they were more alike than different from their spouses, and more importantly than being the same, they felt they were compatible.

Lehrer (1996) suggested that higher levels of religious affiliation in one or more spouses would be negatively associated with marital stability. This was not the case for participants in this study. The stories that emerged were often unique. Paul, a devout Anglican encouraged his atheist Jewish wife to become more involved in her Jewish traditions and community. For Paul, being married to a Jewish person meant that he had an opportunity to live a more full Christian life. His wife often accompanied him to church and enjoyed the celebration of Christmas. Dan, formerly a Mormon, was considering conversion to Judaism and was looking forward to raising his future children Jewish. Having backed away from Mormonism, conversion to Judaism was a means to provide his future children with a religious upbringing and to feel like an insider in his own family. Christine remained committed to Catholicism and also participated in synagogue, weekly Sabbath dinners, and Jewish holidays. Her husband, an active member of his Reform synagogue also attended mass to support his wife. For Christine, her

marriage to Sam meant forming a loving partnership that she hadn't experienced in her previous endogamous marriage.

Richard, a lapsed Catholic, shifted his plans to raise his children in the United Church during his wife's pregnancy and proceeded to raise them in the Jewish faith. Despite the fact that marrying a Jewish person impacted many areas of his life, the meaning of Richard's marriage was centered around the special relationship he shared with his family. In contrast, Bessie, who described herself and her husband as being largely secular, did not struggle in negotiating religious differences or the upbringing of their child rearing. Instead, she struggled with marital issues, parental interference, and ultimately separated from her husband.

Overall, the backdrop of intermarital experiences was the relationship participants had with their respective spouses. Although religion, culture, families, and communities affected them significantly, marital resources mitigated challenges. This is consistent with conclusions drawn from Geffen & Mayer's (1997) recent qualitative study on Jewish-Gentile intermarriage: "Couples vary significantly on both how the interfaith nature of their marriage has affected their own and their families' lives" (p. 4). Further, Falicov (1986) suggested "The factors that make for success or failure, happiness or unhappiness, are extremely complex and cannot be reduced merely to the degrees of cultural commonalities and differences" (p. 430). Mayer (1985) also stressed that endogamy does not guarantee a greater degree of similarity or compatibility than does exogamy.

It needs to be pointed out, however, that participants in this study shared many similarities other than religious and cultural backgrounds. For example, all spouses had received post-secondary education and were professionals. Further, only two participants in this study had children as a by-product of their intermarriages. Because child rearing issues can create the necessity for increased negotiation in intermarried couples (Cowan & Cowan, 1987; Petsonk &

Remsen, 1988), some participants may have adjusted more easily because they did not have child rearing issues. Further, although intermarriage can be particularly challenging for couples who bring together children from previous marriages (Baptiste, 1984), the three participants in this situation may have adjusted relatively easily because their children were adolescents or young adults whose religious upbringing had already been set in motion. This caveat in place, it is important to remember the diversity of intermarital experiences. In his quantitative study of intermarried and inmarried couples, Mayer (1980) concluded that "for most intermarried couples child-rearing does not seem to be the source of marital friction that it is generally thought to be" (p. 514).

Given the diversity of families generally, and the high incidence of intermarriage following previous marriages (Kosmin et al., 1989; Medding et al., 1992), the participants in this study are not atypical. Moreover, not all intermarried couples have children. Although much of previous research has focused on intermarriage from a perspective of Jewish continuity, measuring the religious child rearing practices of parents (Mayer, 1983; Medding et al., 1992; Phillips, 1997), the intermarital experiences of those who do not have children are also relevant and worthy of understanding. As we have seen, psychological models of intermarriage have historically pathologized intermarriers and their relationships (Barron, 1964; Berman, 1968). My research, consistent with contemporary literature on intermarriage, sheds light on the normalcy and diversity of intermarriage (Cowan & Cowan, 1987; Mayer, 1985; Forster & Tabachnik, 1991). Although the powerful influences of religion and culture should not be underestimated, participants described a number of interconnected dynamics that contributed to their experiences.

The importance of differentiating from family of origin and establishing a new boundary around the marital relationship is central to healthy marital functioning in

general (Bowen, 1978; Minuchin, 1974). Healthy boundaries should not be superimposed by external standards, but instead should be defined by couples themselves (Walsh, 1993). The need for differentiation from one's family of origin in the case of intermarriage has also been emphasized in the literature (Falicov, 1986; Friedman, 1982). This is consistent with the stories shared by participants. The couples who were able to establish mutually acceptable boundaries around their relationships and those who were able to communicate and negotiate religious and cultural differences described positive and fulfilling experiences of intermarriage. In contrast, when marital boundaries were violated by family members outside the marriage, and the couple was unable to align together, the critical developmental task of establishing marital trust was challenged (Beavers & Hampson, 1993). When this damage was left unrepaired, the destructive pattern appeared to continually play out through the marital life course, and ultimately lead to marital dissolution.

As suggested in the intermarital literature, flexibility was a key factor associated with the negotiation of religious and cultural differences (Aradi, 1988; Falicov, 1986; McGoldrick & Preto, 1984). Most participants felt that the incorporation of new rituals, traditions, and customs had enriched their lives and had widened their horizons. In contrast, in cases where there was a lack of effective communication and where marital boundaries were not secure, problems occurred.

Healthy boundaries were important even with supportive families. Several participants commented that the Jewish families and communities who warmly welcomed them were extremely tight knit. For some, this was experienced as beneficial, whereas others needed to obtain a comfortable distance to avoid feeling stifled. This is a task required not only of intermarried couples, but also many of their inmarried counterparts. Rosen and Weltman (1996) noted that

Jewish endogamous couples, possibly more than those in other ethnic groups, struggle to find a healthy balance between their marital relationships and their parents. Often these endogamous Jewish couples find parental involvement "stifling" (p. 614).

It is understandable then, that Gentile people who have come from families and communities that were less close knit would undergo a period of adjustment with respect to Jewish familial influences. Geffen and Mayer (1997) noted that physical and psychological distance from families of origin was often a means for intermarried couples in their study to maintain healthy relationships between couples and their families: "Such psychological and physical distancing allows relationships to remain intact and relatively unfractured, as occasions for disappointment and hurt are kept to a minimum" (p. 11). At the same time, the researchers noted that this distance also reduced the level of support that intermarried couples might have received from extended families.

Coping with External Challenges

The meaning of intermarriage gradually evolved over time. This is consistent with many of life's significant experiences. Can a person know the full meaning of parenthood until they have undergone the experience? Can you really know what it will be like to share the better part of your life with a person at the start of a relationship? In the same way, the fuller meaning and experience of intermarriage unfolded over time. In choosing to marry a person who was Jewish, participants in essence stepped into the 'bubble' of intermarital experience and gradually began to recognize some unique benefits and challenges of their choices.

The focus of this research was on marital experiences rather than premarital issues. However, participants did describe some aspects of their courtship. Generally, participants who were older (and had been previously married) at the

time of intermarriage, declared the importance of their religious identities prior to marriage. In contrast, participants who were younger and entering their first marriages were less aware that religion and culture would later be important. Those younger at the time of marriage had not discussed religious differences in great detail. Although Ho (1990) suggested that intermarried couples may be motivated to think through their marital decisions prior to marriage, this was not the case for most of the participants in this study. This is important to note given that the courtship stage of a relationship allows for testing compatibility that may later impact "the quality and stability of marriage" (Cate & Lloyd, 1992, p. 11). Consistent with many accounts in the intermarital literature, prior to marriage, many couples did not realize the full extent of the challenges they would later face (Cowan & Cowan, 1987; Mayer, 1985; Schneider, 1989). As McGoldrick and Preto (1984) noted: "Couples typically anticipate at the beginning of their relationship that they can overcome all odds in marriage" (p. 352).

Sooner or later the influences of family, friends, communities, and religious authorities were felt. Those who had more experience with Jewish culture prior to marriage were less surprised by this. Although all participants faced some kind of resistance, the degree of opposition varied significantly. In some cases the resistance was subtle, whereas in some other cases it was blatant. Four participants in this study faced opposition from their Gentile parents or Jewish in-laws. As emphasized by Falicov (1986), parental opposition and a lack of 'permission' to marry can be detrimental to the psychological well-being of a person. Negative external forces were experienced differently by participants depending on a number of interrelated factors, including the individual resources of the spouses, the development of the marital relationship, and the reactions of families and other support networks. This is consistent with crisis theory (McCubbin and Patterson, 1982), which suggests that although couples faced with

crises are more vulnerable to experiencing marital distress, internal and external resources of a couple will determine the impact of the crisis on the marriage.

As we saw, Richard's parents, and particularly his mother, were unhappy about his marrying Lynda because she was Jewish. His belief, however, that "A man's connection to his family, particularly to his mother, can be the ruination of a marriage" motivated his decision to align with Lynda. This is consistent with Walsh (1993), who stressed the interconnection of underlying core beliefs and family functioning. Similarly, Dan felt a need to align strongly with his wife when his Mormon family blamed her for Dan's decision to back away from Mormonism. Consistent with the literature on intermarried couples, external opposition was ineffective in deterring couples from intermarrying and in some cases served to further solidify the relationships (Mayer, 1961; Mayer, 1985).

The case of extreme discrimination faced by Sue and her husband by her hometown community illuminates the importance of internal and external resources in mitigating a crisis (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982). Although initially, Sue's parents were not as actively supportive as she would have hoped, she was strongly supported by her husband, David, and his parents. Sue was not blamed or seen as an extension of her community. As a consequence, her struggle was not marital. In fact, she felt that the experience had solidified her commitment and relationship to her husband. At the same time, she needed to come to terms with the disappointment and shame she felt with regards to her community and family.

In contrast, Bessie's negative experiences with her mother-in-law during her engagement and following marriage proved destructive to Bessie personally and to her marriage. Unfortunately, she and her husband were unable to align together in the face of this opposition. The fact that Bessie's family of origin lived overseas meant that obtaining ongoing support from them was difficult.

As we saw, couples used many strategies to deal with external opposition. Communication, mutual support, and in some cases, moving far distances were deemed important. Interestingly, in some cases, participants chose to withhold hurtful information from their spouses in order to protect them. It is possible that this was also an attempt to avoid discussing issues deemed threatening to the well-being of the relationship (Duck, 1986). The "MUM effect" described in social psychological literature with respect to relationships more generally, also suggests that people often avoid transmitting negative information to others because they are aware that it elicits negative feelings (Baron & Byrne, 1991).

Those who attempted to acquire rabbinical officiation met strong opposition. Some who were unable to elicit rabbinical officiation for their weddings felt hurt and angry that their marriages were not being blessed and that exceptions were not being made for them. In Mayer and Avgar's (1987) study, half of the Gentile respondents who had been refused rabbinical officiation felt that the rabbis had reacted "insensitively" to them and their spouses.

In the present study, several participants were initially surprised to learn that their Jewish spouses would not agree to have a member of the clergy officiate. Jewish spouses indicated that they were not comfortable with clergy officiation, and at other times they indicated that it was parents and family who would be extremely uncomfortable with this. McGoldrick and Preto (1984) suggested that at life cycle milestones, people turn to ritual for support. When it cannot be accessed, it can be extremely disappointing: "When we go through life cycle changes we need our cultural identity most; it provides us with the rituals, symbols, and the context of familiar meanings that cushion the changes for us" (p. 348).

The reactions of some participants to the rabbinical opposition can be related to literature in the area of religiosity, ethnicity, and minorities. Ethnic minorities who have been historically oppressed tend to place a greater value on

collective values than on the individual (Phinney, 1996). It may be the case, therefore, that it is particularly difficult for members of a larger religio-ethnic group to relate to the (sometimes extreme) survival mentality of minority groups. Furthermore, others have suggested that it can be particularly difficult for those who have Christian backgrounds to relate to the strong focus on community values as opposed to an emphasis on individual truth (Duncan, 1992; Forster & Tabachnik, 1991).

Mayer's study (1978) suggested that the refusal of rabbis to officiate a wedding did not impact the level of participation in Jewish traditions following the wedding. Whether or not this is true for the participants in this study is unclear. What is evident, however, is that the experience was hurtful and disappointing for some. Rabbinical challenges were also associated with burial planning. Participants indicated that it was important for them to be supportive to their spouses and find creative solutions to this dilemma.

The Life Cycle Model Revisited

The life cycle model is often used to conceptualize challenges faced by married and intermarried couples through the developmental course of their relationships (Aradi, 1988; McGoldrick et al., 1993; McGoldrick & Preto, 1984). Undoubtedly, the model is invaluable in delineating many of the life cycle stages that individuals and married couples may undergo through the marital life course.

In his adaptation of the family life cycle model for interfaith couples, Aradi (1988) outlined key issues and developmental tasks from courtship to later life stages. He suggested that during courtship, couples need to test their religious compatibility, and in preparation for marriage, they need to develop a mutually acceptable wedding ceremony. Newlyweds face the tasks of developing an interfaith identity and keeping connected with both of their respective families. The birth of a child requires the creation of an interfaith family identity and an

agreement about birth rituals. Couples with adolescent children need to increase their religious flexibility. In addition, the launching of teen and adult children requires the couple to accept their offspring's religious choice and their mate selection. Finally, later in the marital cycle, couples need to accept an increased focus on spirituality and need to agree on death rituals (p. 79).

As evidenced by the theme "Navigating Through The Life Cycle", couples clearly underwent many of these developmental tasks. Planning wedding ceremonies, negotiating and renegotiating the religious upbringing of children, and navigating religious and cultural traditions throughout the life cycle were in many cases challenging. Religious and cultural issues were often salient with respect to child-related issues. Some Jewish partners, who had been minimally observant with respect to Judaism, suddenly "came out of remission" prior to the birth of a child or during stages of family planning. Cowan and Cowan (1987) warned that this can be a "time bomb" waiting to erupt, and Crohn (1998) described the process as "waking up from cultural amnesia" (p. 302). In some cases, participants themselves also "came out of remission" with respect to their desires to provide their children with a religious or cultural upbringing. This is consistent with Fowler's (1981) extensive theory and research suggesting that some adults find themselves shifting from a stage called "Individuative-Reflective Faith", where religion seems less important, to a stage called "Conjunctive Faith", where they begin to turn back to religion and feel a sense of loyalty to their communities.

Those participants whose spouses came out of remission, were not strongly affiliated with their own religions, and therefore they were willing to shift gears and to raise their children in the Jewish faith. In fact, two male participants indicated that they would likely convert to Judaism in the future. Consistent with previous studies, conversion motivations included a desire to support their Jewish partners, to provide their children with a unified religious identity, to access the right to be

buried in a Jewish cemetery, and to feel like an insider in their own family (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991; Avgar & Mayer, 1987; Mayer & Sheingold, 1979). Although Sue chose not to convert formally, she was willing to raise her children solely in the Jewish faith because she felt it was important to her husband. At the same time, she felt a sense of worry, divided family loyalties, and a desire to pass on her own traditions to future offspring.

The life cycle model also elucidates some of the challenges associated with coming to a consensus with respect to religious traditions and religious holidays. For some Jewish spouses, intermarriage was a sharing of both traditions. Some participants indicated that they had gained a great deal through their connection with Jewish traditions, customs, and culture. Others noted that their Jewish spouses enjoyed participating in Christian-based traditions such as Christmas and Easter. These participants felt that intermarriage had given their Jewish partners an opportunity to enjoy Christian celebrations without feeling like they were betraying their Jewish culture.

In contrast, Christmas symbols were felt as threatening and a symbol of assimilation for other Jewish spouses. Stories of "the December Dilemma" in descriptive literature (Cowan & Cowan, 1987; Schneider, 1989) illustrate the potential challenges of managing Christmas and holiday celebrations in Jewish-Gentile marriage. As noted in the literature review, Medding et al. (1993) used the presence of a Christmas tree as the sole criterion for identifying "a dual identity household", regardless of the level of Jewish identification. They argued that "As the religious aspects of Judaism have become relatively less central to the core of Jewish identity, and shared feelings have become more important, being *not* [italics in origin text] Christian has taken on greater salience as a defining element of Jewishness" (p. 15). Clearly the label of "dual identity household" did not reflect the experience of Richard, who along with his wife, raised his children in the

Jewish faith. He did not view himself or his family as having a Christian identity, but instead described himself as being in a Jewish household.

As we saw, some participants chose to reduce the practice of Christmas traditions in their home at the request of Jewish spouses. Some acknowledged their initial disappointment, whereas others did not. It is hard to know whether this was a function of denying hurtful feelings, or whether some had little need for Christian traditions.

In his discussion of meaning in relationships, Duck (1994) suggested that it is not the actual exchange that matters in relationships, but rather the symbolic meaning that people make of the exchange that is most important. In this study, it appeared that the meaning of compromise was multifaceted. For some, compromise meant a loss of tradition and putting others needs before their own. For others, the compromise meant that they were strengthening their relationships with spouses and in-laws, and still for others it meant passing on a unified Jewish identity to offspring. Often there were multiple meanings associated with compromise.

Consistent with married couples in the general population, financial negotiations were important for intermarried couples through the life cycle. Some participants indicated that finding a balance with respect to charities, parochial education costs, holiday costs, and synagogue dues was important. Negotiating finances may require more flexibility when attempting to support both religious and cultural traditions.

As we have seen, the family life cycle model (McGoldrick et al., 1993) and the adapted interfaith family life cycle model (Aradi, 1988) are useful in their recognition of religious, traditional, and cultural practices that often require negotiation and compromise during the course of intermarriage. Any model, however, useful as it may be, is not without potential pitfalls. Although the interfaith

life cycle model adapted by Aradi (1988) is useful in illuminating some of the particular challenges that interfaith couples undergo, it needs to be adopted with caution. The model may inadvertently invite theorists, researchers, and therapists to adopt a linear, 'cookie cutter' approach to intermarriage. As we have seen, not all participants in this study underwent all of these phases. Further, even for those who did undergo many of these issues, their process did not unfold in a linear, stage-like fashion. Rather, issues emerged in a fluid way.

In his recent critique of the family life cycle model, Erickson (1998) suggested that the paradigm "is founded on a deficit-comparison model and normative concepts" (p. 344). Rather than viewing each couple's development in their own terms, he argues that the focus of the model tends to compare individuals and families to the "normative standard", inadvertently pathologizing those who fall outside these socially constructed boundaries. Although I believe that the model is invaluable in understanding couples who may be struggling to meet a developmental transition, if used inappropriately, it may inadvertently superimpose "tasks required to resolve them" (Aradi, 1988, p. 78). This may be particularly detrimental for intermarried couples who have historically been pathologized in psychological models.

In addition, the model may not adequately emphasize gender issues with respect to Jewish-Gentile intermarriage. As reviewed earlier, intermarried Gentile women in the United States are twice as likely as their male counterparts to convert to Judaism (Mayer & Sheingold, 1979). Further, Kosmin et al. (1991) reported that two-thirds of American "Jews by Choice" were women. Gentile women in the present study recognized pressures that were different than those described by male participants with respect to child rearing and responsibilities within the home. Women acknowledged that they felt like a minority with respect to Gentile intermarriers because the vast majority had converted to Judaism and often

fervently observed Jewish traditions. This is consistent with research suggesting that overall, converts to Judaism are at least as religiously observant as are born Jews (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991; Lazerwitz, 1995; Mayer & Sheingold, 1979).

Because much of Jewish tradition centers around the home, including Jewish cooking, the making of Sabbath dinners, and the preparation of Passover seders, women in this study indicated that they needed to negotiate the extent of their participation in these areas. Although this is likely experienced by Jewish people as well, for Gentile women who have not been reared with Jewish traditions, there is likely an added effort required. Furthermore, some men indicated that at times they felt that they were disappointing their mates when they were unable or unwilling to participate more fully in traditions typically required of Jewish men.

Family studies in the general population have demonstrated that employed women continue to be responsible for 80% of the housework and child care obligations (Walsh, 1993). In addition, research in the general population suggests that overall, women experience greater marital dissatisfaction than do men (McGoldrick et al., 1993). Given these factors in the population at large, Gentile women in the context of Jewish-Gentile marriage, may too be at greater risk for marital dissatisfaction. Further, because many Gentile women convert to Judaism, women in this study indicated that they knew few if any nonconverted Gentile women who were intermarried. It is not surprising that at times they felt alone in their experience and wondered how others had reacted.

Contemporary psychological models suggest that female development differs from that of males (McGoldrick et al., 1993). Whereas male developmental models have typically emphasized "separation, differentiation, and autonomy", female models place an emphasis on "values of caring and attachment, interdependence, relationship, and attention to context" (p. 412). Consequently,

the importance of social support, particularly for nonconverted women in smaller Jewish communities is of note. In summary, then, the family life cycle model (McGoldrick, et al., 1993) and its adapted Interfaith life cycle model (Aradi, 1988), can be useful when put into context of individual and gender differences.

Insider-Outsider Experiences

Given that marriage is enduring and intimate, intermarriage perhaps more than any other type of relationship tests social boundaries, the willingness of insiders and outsiders to accept each other in a long-lasting, exclusive, and largely non-hierarchical relationship. (Alba & Golden, 1986, p. 202-203)

Insider-outsider experiences can be understood at the individual, marital, familial, community, and societal levels. Feeling like an insider was connected with identity, acceptance, and group boundaries. At a marital level, to feel like an insider is to experience compatibility, mutual respect, acceptance, sharing, and love. Walsh (1993) suggested that these feelings of "connectedness" are key to healthy marital and family functioning in the general population. Couples' differentiation from their families of origin and their abilities to find ways to create a healthy boundary around their marital relationships facilitated insider feelings within their marriage.

Feeling like an insider did not mean always feeling the same, but rather feeling compatible. For example, several participants described the playful way in which they and their partners poked fun at differences with respect to their religious or cultural status. Stereotyping, however, can be used as a smoke screen for marital issues (Friedman, 1982; McGoldrick & Preto, 1984) and can thereby result in outsider feelings. Bessie's experience of her husband insisting that she "could not possibly understand the Holocaust" demonstrates how generalizations can be divisive and make a partner feel like an outsider. Other examples suggesting that certain topics should be restricted to them as Gentiles speaks to a sense of feeling like an outsider.

Feeling like an insider or outsider with respect to extended families was also described. In many cases, couples were welcomed by their Jewish families and mentored. This served to enhance a feeling of acceptance and inclusion. Often the family mentorship provided experiential opportunities for participants to feel more comfortable with traditions and to be included as part of the group. In contrast, family resistance often solidified marital boundaries and resulted in couples distancing from negative external influences.

At times, participants felt like outsiders in the largely Jewish gatherings. Feeling like an outsider amongst Jewish people was often a function of being the only Gentile in the group, therefore a minority. Outsider feelings were also induced in those who had little knowledge and experience with Jewish traditions. The introduction to foreign customs, rituals, and language was overwhelming for most participants at first. Cultural differences such as communication styles, physical expression of feelings, and behavioral norms in synagogue required adjustment. Learning the ropes through study, mentorship, and sheer experience served to build what Mayer describes as religious or cultural "bridges" (Mayer, 1985). Participants also built bridges by assimilating the new traditions into their own cultural or religious frameworks.

Several felt relieved when they successfully learned to decode some of the Jewish cultural expressions, mannerisms, or practices. The importance of decoding cultural norms and verbal communication has been addressed in the intermarital literature (Duncan, 1992; Falicov, 1986; Mayer, 1985; Rosen & Weltman, 1996). For example Rosen and Weltman's (1996) recognition of the outsider's perspective of Jewish verbal communication was also described by participants in this study: "Cynicism and criticism are frequently used in Jewish families to get family members to react and respond. To an outsider, this may

appear as anger or hostility. However, such expressions or criticism may actually be ways of showing caring" (p. 619).

Not only did learning the ropes help people feel more comfortable in Jewish settings, but reciprocally, they often felt treated more like an insider by the families. Some participants commented that they would never fully feel like a complete insider internally; that they could not completely internalize the feeling of Jewish tribal or cultural identity. This is consistent with many converts to Judaism. Although many converted Gentiles are equally if not more religiously observant than their Jewish born counterparts, the feeling of cultural, tribal, and ethnic identity is often more difficult to integrate (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991; Mayer & Avgar, 1987). Contemporary Jewish outreach efforts are recognizing the importance of sharing historical, ethnic, and cultural issues with Gentiles married to Jews, rather than focusing solely on religious practices (Forster & Tabachnik, 1991).

Feeling like an outsider was also associated with experiencing less acceptance by Jewish families and communities. Over time, some felt that they were treated "as if [they] were Jewish", whereas others felt their identity was restricted vis a vis the community. As Cowan and Cowan (1987) suggested, "As a whole, the Jewish community has not yet decided whether to treat interfaith couples as problems or people; as pariahs or as men and women who are not yet committed Jews" (p. 269). Kalin and Berry (1996), in their Canadian study of ethnocentrism, reported that in-group preferences existed in most ethnic groups and were highest among French Canadians and Jewish people. The authors suggest that in-group preferences may "serve as an emotional barrier against the perceived threat from contact with other ethnic groups" (p. 259). Further, Egon Mayer, the foremost researcher in the field of Jewish-Gentile marriage encourages the Jewish community to reach out to Gentile intermarriers:

All minorities have difficulty being accepted as full-fledged equals in their host cultures, as we Jews, of all people, should know. This problem is all the more true for Jews by choice who must be integrated into Jewish culture and society which has not had the experience of integrating outsiders for nearly two thousand years. (Mayer, 1983, cited in Forster & Tabachnik, 1991, p. 142)

Most participants in this study described an increased level of acceptance by the Jewish community over time. In several cases, intermarriage also served to reduce negative stereotypes of Jewish people previously held by participants' Gentile parents or families. This is consistent with Kalin (1996), whose results of a quantitative Canadian study on attitudes toward 12 ethnic groups suggest that "contact with members of ethnic groups leads to positive attitudes toward them" (p. 178). Further, in their discussion of "recategorization", Baron and Byrne (1991) reported that contact with members of an out-group can shift previously perceived "us" and "them" boundaries.

There was a trade-off of insider/outsider feelings for some participants. In becoming more of an insider with the Jewish community, some felt more like outsiders with their respective Gentile communities. Further, in some cases, participants felt a need to minimize their own traditions in order to maintain insider status within their families and the Jewish community. Social exchange theories suggest that relationships are motivated and maintained by a desire to maximize profits and minimize losses (Huston & Burgess, 1979). It is possible that these participants felt that relationship stability and insider status within the Jewish community was more important to them than asserting their cultural traditions. In one case, however, there was a feeling of resentment related to continually putting others' needs before hers. Again, as emphasized by Duck (1994), it is the meaning that people make of exchanges that is often more important than the exchanges themselves.

The acquiring of a minority lens is an intriguing component of the insider outsider experience. Several participants had become more vigilant with respect to language about Jewish people or other groups. Rosen and Weltman (1996) noted that "historically, Jews have been persecuted so often that they tend to be on their guard, anticipating attack" (p. 616). Similarly, Brodbar-Nemzer et al. (1993) reported results of a study of Canadian Jewry suggesting that 79% of the sample believed that there is "a great deal of anti-Semitism in Canada" and 51% believed that anti-Semitism had increased in recent years, despite the fact that only 10% reported having had personal experiences with anti-Semitism (p. 56). It appears that some participants developed a strong sense of empathy toward the psychological aspects of being a members of a minority.

Brodbar-Nemzer et. al. (1993) reported that anti-Semitism is significantly higher in smaller Canadian Jewish communities. Sue and her husband's story speaks to this. Sue's experiences with anti-Semitism resulted in a shifting of her core beliefs about her community and the world generally. Richard also faced fear for his children's safety during political unrest in Israel. Having come from a majority group, these participants had not been 'inoculated' gradually, as many minority members are through personal experience and through historical accounts of persecution passed on through the generations (Phinney, 1996; Rosen & Weltman, 1996).

A related aspect of the minority lens, is that some participants were reluctant to communicate negative feelings about Jewish-related issues for fear of sounding anti-Semitic. It was also interesting to note that in some cases, participants were tolerant of stereotypes directed at them by Jewish people, but they felt that as members of a majority group, it was not acceptable for them to generalize about Jewish people. This issue will be discussed more fully with respect to marital counselling issues.

The Research Process

One of the added benefits of qualitative research is the dynamic process in which both participants and researchers engage. The open-ended interview in phenomenological research is an unstructured conversation about a topic that interests both participants and the researcher. The purpose of the interview is to allow participants, who are closest to the experience at hand, to lead the way, rather than directing them. The process often elicits new understanding and change in both researchers and participants (Kvale, 1996).

Participants' Interview Process

In order to gain an understanding of how the interview process impacted participants and their disclosures, during the latter stage of the final interview I asked them to describe what it was like talking about their intermarriages with me. Participants commented that the interview process was a positive experience for them and most indicated that no one had ever asked them about this aspect of their marriage. Many expressed that our society's tendency toward "political correctness" often results in avoidance of the topic:

It was interesting because. . . no one has ever asked at all about it. . . It's a subject that everybody tends to tiptoe around because Christians are very worried about bringing it up. . . and with my Jewish friends I don't think it would ever come up. . . I think there are so many misconceptions in the Christian community about what the Jewish community is like. . . Even the people who don't buy into the stereotypes are still worried that they will say something wrong or that they'll say something offensive. . . So they would just be very careful not to [say anything].

As noted earlier, several revealed that in the process of sharing negative feelings, at times they feared that they might sound anti-Semitic. Interestingly, some indicated that they felt more comfortable sharing these feelings during the interview, knowing that I was Jewish and would "understand":

Some of the things that I say, if I said it to a person who wasn't Jewish, they might think I was being derogatory or harsh or something. I think you can

understand that I wasn't saying it in that way. That within any group of people you can talk about one another in ways that you cannot talk when you are talking across a boundary and I've become comfortable over the years of talking to friends in the Jewish community as if I belonged in that group. . . . So, I didn't hold anything back, I didn't have to.

For some, my being a "stranger" was a source of comfort and made them feel more able to speak frankly, whereas for others, talking to someone new in an unstructured interview was awkward at first, and they required time to adjust and feel comfortable with the process. At the beginning of a first interview, one participant was forthright in acknowledging his discomfort:

This is a very strange format. . . . It's difficult enough for, for a man to discuss [pause] uh, uh these sorts of things at the best of times--and you're sort of a stranger so. . . . I, I'll try to leave that aside and be as frank as I can.

Overall, my perception was that many participants were surprised by their own reactions during the course of the interviews. Many laughed full heartedly as they shared the ironies of navigating through the peaks and valleys of intermarital experiences. In addition, at times during the interview, I was aware of pregnant pauses, flushing of a person's skin, softer vocal tones, or a high degree of animation and affect. Some participants articulated this experience verbally:

My thoughts just kind of came out and it certainly wasn't in any structured form or anything. I kind of felt spent, I thought 'how stupid of me to say some of the things that I did'. . . . After the interview, it was kind of emotional for me. I felt that what I had to say was probably stupid. . . . I mean, [being] an adult and having these kinds of feelings.

The interview process also allowed people to reveal contradictory or inconsistent feelings. I believe that providing two interviews offered people the opportunity to share different aspects of their experiences depending on their present circumstances and mood: "I wanted to try and think through and give the sort of answers that really are true. And sometimes you feel one way on a given day and on another day so you may not be entirely consistent."

The women in the study were particularly curious as to what other females might have experienced. Because they did not have contact with other nonconverted Gentile women, they were unsure as to how their experiences compared to other women in their circumstances: "You wonder if you're weird. . . . I'm curious as to how much you've heard from other people." This speaks to the need for normalization of intermarital experiences, particularly for nonconverted Gentile women, who are fewer in numbers than men.

There are pros and cons to having only Gentile spouses as part of the interview process. I asked participants how they believed the presence of their Jewish spouses during interviews might have impacted them. Although some indicated that their spouses might have helped "jog" their memories, many indicated that it would have "inhibited" what they said: "You wouldn't say some of the more outrageous things I think". Through the course of the interviews, participants commented that the interviews made them "think about things" and some said that they had revealed issues that they had not previously discussed with their spouses. Several participants indicated that the interview process motivated them to discuss their experiences further with their spouses.

My Research Process

This has been a learning process for me as well. When I embarked on this research, my preconceptions were based on my own experiences, having come from a strong Jewish community, and having intermarried myself. During the research process, I found myself surprised by a number of the findings. First, I was fascinated by the diverse backgrounds, stories, and experiences that participants shared. It was also interesting to note that most participants had not discussed in great detail religious or cultural differences prior to their marriages. I was intrigued by the diverse and creative ways in which participants and their spouses managed challenging situations.

Having grown up in a Jewish environment, many of the Jewish traditions, customs, and norms, both spoken and unspoken are in my bones. Participants' stories helped me 'see' the experience of being part of Jewish culture from a non-Jewish perspective. When some shared that their first experiences with Jewish traditions felt foreign, it helped me understand how overwhelming, confusing, yet intriguing that might be.

I also learned that being identified as a member of majority was tricky for participants in certain situations. At times they seemed to be in a double-bind situation. Communication and sharing of ideas and opinions is important in close relationships. Yet, in some cases, the desire to protect, to empathize, and to understand partners, families, and communities, made some feel unable to share openly their concerns, discomfort, or questions. In some cases this may have been adaptive for couples, whereas in others, being able to share their feelings more openly may have been useful.

During the course of this research, I had a related experience to that of participants, with respect to being concerned about the feelings of others. Jewish-Gentile intermarriage has long been an emotionally laden topic, particularly for traditional Jewish people. In addition, the topic is often very important to those who are intermarried. In reviewing the literature, I found some of the material to be rather sensationalized, and often insensitive to the feelings of intermarried couples. It was important to illuminate the literature on the topic, yet I was concerned at times, that the material might be offensive to some readers. I was also vigilant in my attempt to describe the intermarital experiences of participants. At times, however, I feared that I might inadvertently offend participants by revealing their personal experiences. Staying in close touch with the data and obtaining regular supervision was important for me to ensure that the findings were derived from the stories of participants.

A related issue is that language itself is extremely value laden and often loaded with historical and cultural meanings. At times, I found presenting this research difficult due to the cumbersome nature of the intermarital terminology. In order to facilitate as best as I could brevity and clarity, I have often referred to people in this study as "Jews", "Gentiles", or "Converts", despite that fact that they are all people. Although this is the language of the literature, it felt awkward and insensitive at times. Ultimately, like other researchers before me, I did the best I could, and hoped that the presentation would not prove offensive.

In the process of analyzing the data, it was challenging at times to differentiate intermarital issues from marital dynamics more generally. I attempted to do this using my own judgment and the judgment of supervisors. Ultimately, however, phenomenological research is perspectival. Throughout the research process, I have been aware of my own attitudes and have attempted not to let them override the stories of participants. Nonetheless, the findings are derived from the data, but are necessarily impacted by my experiences and understandings.

Implications for Counselling

The findings of this research have implications for counsellor training, premarital and marital counselling. First, the findings reinforce the importance of ethnicity training for therapists. McGoldrick & Giordano (1996) emphasized the importance for therapists to gain an understanding of their own ethnicity as well as the ethnicities of their clients. Participants in this study indicated that they felt comfortable talking about Jewish-related issues knowing that I "would understand" because of my Jewish background. This speaks to the importance of therapists learning about other religions and ethnicities through formal study and by empowering their clients, who are experts of their own experiences, to share the nuances they are encountering.

A therapist's religio-ethnic background can be a double edged sword. It is important that therapists be comfortable with their own ethnic identities to avoid projecting their own feelings onto clients (McGoldrick & Giordano, 1996, p. 22). Participants described their fear of being viewed as anti-Semitic when sharing negative feelings. It is essential that clients feel that they can safely disclose negative experiences without feeling attacked by therapists or by their spouses. As participants themselves expressed, our "politically correct society" can render sharing difficult or conflicted feelings even more challenging that it would be otherwise.

The findings of this research also speak to the importance of premarital counselling for intermarried couples. It has been demonstrated that the quality of premarital communication is a predictor of marital stability and adjustment (Cate & Lloyd, 1992; Markman & Hahlweg, 1993). Because many interfaith couples are married via a civil ceremony, they might not receive premarital counselling through a member of the clergy or rabbinate. It is therefore recommended that rabbis or clergy offer premarital counselling to these couples or refer couples to therapists who will do so. Demonstrating sensitivity to the feelings of these couples and using a realistic approach is essential. Suggesting relevant books on the topic of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage (Cowan & Cowan, 1987; Kaye, 1980; Mayer, 1985; & Schneider, 1989) might alert couples to some of the benefits and possible challenges of interfaith marriage. Further, recommendations to outreach programs available in the Jewish and Christian communities could provide couples with additional support should the need arise. Because there are far fewer Jewish outreach resources in Canada, the invaluable web site provided by the Jewish Outreach Institute in New York (JOI4ALL@AOL.COM) could be suggested.

Although obtaining a rabbi to officiate interfaith marriages in the United States is difficult, there are far fewer rabbis in Canada, and therefore fewer who will

officiate interfaith ceremonies. There are presently only three rabbis in all of Canada who will officiate interfaith weddings (L. bat Joseph, personal communication, 1999). Given the hurtful nature of being refused officiation, Mayer (1989) emphasized that rabbis need to take care in how they deliver the news that they will not officiate. Further, couples should be referred to those who will officiate. Therapists, clergy, or rabbis may need to help intermarried couples understand the survivalist concerns of the rabbinate and the organized Jewish community. This may help contextualize the refusal as an attempt to protect Jewish identity as opposed to being a personal rejection. Further, appropriate reading materials may also assist couples to find ways to incorporate religious aspects into their civil ceremonies. Canadian outreach programs developed by Christian or Jewish institutions would be useful in helping intermarried couples integrate into the communities of their choice.

Given the unique ways in which participants worked through religious and cultural issues, both internally, and with their spouses, it is important that therapists avoid superimposing 'shoulds' on clients' process. As earlier discussed, although the family life cycle model is invaluable in identifying common issues that intermarried couples undergo, the approach should be used with caution. Because religious and cultural identity often unfolds over time, and because people may struggle to communicate the ambivalent feelings they are experiencing, clients may need assistance to develop a language to discuss their feelings safely. Postmodern narrative approaches described by Erickson (1998) and (Biever, Bobele, & North, 1998) focus on the importance of inviting clients' unfolding stories, adopting a collaborative approach, and generating new understandings with intermarried individuals and couples. Further, Ho (1990) presented useful "ecosystemic" and "transcultural framework" approaches in addition to the family life cycle approach (Aradi, 1988; McGoldrick et al., 1993). As

we saw, participants in this research often reacted very differently to similar circumstances. Therefore, the importance of exploring the meaning that intermarriage has for individuals and couples is essential.

Focusing on understanding cultural differences and their historical context, and on developing effective coping strategies to negotiate differences and mitigate external challenges is important (Falicov, 1986; McCubbin & Patterson, 1982; McGoldrick & Preto, 1984). Providing clients with appropriate reading materials may normalize their experiences and familiarize them with useful strategies employed by other intermarried couples. Many participants used humor to share the ironies of navigating through the ups and downs of religious and cultural differences. Accessing humor appropriately may serve to help clients in crisis put their challenges into perspective. Finally, social support is extremely useful in mitigating stressors (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982). Encouraging clients to access support from appropriate friends and family members may help circumvent challenges.

Just as it was difficult to tease out intermarital issues from marital dynamics, this is likely the case in therapy. Religious and cultural issues need acknowledgment, but should not be used as a "smoke screen" for other marital dynamics (Friedman, 1982). At times, intermarriage may be distressing for the families of couples even more than the couples themselves. Given the fact that older generations tend to hold more traditional ties, these parents may require support and may also benefit from therapy (Alper, 1992). Finally, although the focus of this research has not been on the experiences of children of intermarriage, clearly, intermarried parents may need assistance to avoid placing their children in the middle of religio-cultural challenges (Cowan & Cowan, 1987; Kaye, 1980; Petsonk & Remsen, 1988).

Implications for Future Research

The findings of this study suggest a need for further research in several areas of Jewish-Gentile marriage. Given the void of research on the families of Gentile spouses, qualitative studies examining the experience of Gentile families are warranted. Some participants indicated that their Gentile parents initially had little contact with Jewish people and some held negative stereotypes of Jewish people prior to their marriage to spouses. Moreover, some participants indicated that at times they felt more like outsiders in their Gentile communities. A Mormon family clearly struggled with their son's intermarriage. In addition, another Gentile family faced anti-Semitism in their hometown when their daughter intermarried. How did these parents and families make sense of their experiences? What was the meaning of intermarriage to them?

Gender issues presented in this research suggest the need for further study examining the unique needs of Gentile women and men with respect to intermarriage. Previous studies have focused on determining why people intermarry, often in an attempt to prevent these unions. Future research examining the what and how of intermarriage is warranted. More specifically, it would be beneficial to examine the various coping strategies used respectively by Gentile men and women who intermarry. Studies examining the needs of intermarried couples would be useful to therapists and to Canadian outreach efforts by Jewish and Christian groups alike.

The focus of this research was on participants' marital experiences as opposed to premarital issues. Nonetheless, the premarital stages of marriage can be extremely important in determining the stability of marriage (Cate & Lloyd, 1992; Markman & Hahlweg, 1993). Few participants in this study indicated that they had discussed religious and cultural issues in great depth prior to marriage. Although Mayer's (1961) earlier work provides useful information in his retrospective

qualitative study on Jewish-Gentile courtship, current research is warranted in the area. Studies examining the impact of communication related to religio-cultural issues and premarital psychoeducation on marital stability are warranted.

As outreach programs increase in Canada, it will be important to research the extent to which these programs are meeting the needs of intermarried couples. Finally, further research on blended intermarried families is warranted, particularly in cases where children are younger and have not established their religious identities.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of the meaning of intermarriage for seven Gentile people who were married to Jewish spouses and living in Edmonton, Canada. The findings of this research contextualize intermarriage as one kind of marriage with unique benefits and challenges. Experiences were shaped by interconnected factors including personalities, marital dynamics, external forces such as family, friends, communities, and society in general. Further, the experience of intermarriage was impacted by values, beliefs, and priorities passed on through family, history, religion, and culture. Ultimately, the relationships that participants had with their spouses were backdrops of their intermarital experiences. The fuller meaning of intermarriage did not unfold in a linear fashion, but as unique stories. There was often a need to cope with external opposition and to 'learn the ropes' of Jewish culture. Negotiation, communication, respect, and flexibility throughout the life-cycle was important. The meaning of being an insider and outsider was described by participants with respect to their marriages, families, and communities. Many felt that intermarriage had enriched their lives and widened their horizons, whereas one participant felt disillusioned by the experience and felt that religion, lack of spousal support, and family interference had ultimately been divisive. The

connection between marital dynamics and intermarital issues cannot be overemphasized. Therapists working with intermarried couples will be challenged in teasing out the connection between the two.

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APPENDIX A

Edmonton Jewish Life, September-October, 1997, p. A6

"Researcher Seeks Participants for Inter-marriage Study"

A doctoral student at the University of Alberta is embarking on a research project that will be of great interest to the Edmonton Jewish community.

Karen Cogan, a Counselling Psychology Ph.D. candidate is researching the experience of intermarriage from the perspective of spouses who are not Jewish. Cogan's preliminary research has turned up a definite lack of understanding of the gentile perspective of intermarriage.

Egon Mayer of Brooklyn College, a leading researcher in intermarriage has expressed interest in Cogan's project, citing a lack of detailed research on gentile spouses who are intermarried to Jewish people.

Intermarriage is an ever growing influence on the Jewish community and Cogan feels any insights she gathers on this little understood population will greatly aid overall understanding of the intermarriage phenomenon. The findings of her study will be important information for intermarried couples and their families, religious communities, as well as psychologists, counsellors and religious leaders. The study is expected to be published in 1999.

The key to Cogan's project will be accessing people who are willing to share their experiences, good, bad, or indifferent. She is currently seeking male and female participants who are non-Jewish and married to Jewish people.

If you or someone you know in Alberta falls within these parameters, then Karen Cogan would be interested in hearing from you (telephone number provided). She will be happy to provide you with further details about her study at that time. Please leave only your first name and number as all inquiries will be held in the strictest of confidence.

APPENDIX B

Temple Beth Orah Newsletter, Autumn, 1997

Are you interested in contributing to research on intermarriage?

My name is Karen Cogan and I am a doctoral student in the Counselling Psychology program at the University of Alberta. My Doctoral research focuses on the area of intermarriage, a topic relevant to so many couples and families today. The purpose of my research is to understand the experience of being married to Jewish people from the perspective of spouses who are not Jewish. In order to do so, I am interviewing *non-Jewish men and women who are married to Jewish people*. The findings of this study will be important information for intermarried couples and their families, religious communities, as well as psychologists, counsellors, and religious leaders.

I would be grateful for your interest in participating and would like the opportunity to explain the study to you in more detail. If you are at all interested, or if you know someone who might be interested in participating, I'd appreciate if you would call me (Karen Cogan) at (Phone number) for more information. If I am not available, please leave your first name and telephone number on my answering machine and I will return your call shortly. All inquiries will be held in the strictest of confidence.

Thank you for your interest! I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Karen Cogan

APPENDIX C

Written Description

Dear _____,

Thanks so much for your interest in my dissertation research on intermarriage. I value the contribution that you can make to my study and your participation in it. I am writing this letter to review some of the things we talked about on the telephone the other day.

The aim of my research is to gain an understanding of the experience of being married to Jewish people from the perspective of spouses who are not Jewish. The findings of this study will be important information for intermarried couples and their families, religious communities, as well as psychologists, counsellors, and religious leaders who provide marital counselling.

Your participation in the study will involve several interviews. The first interview will give us an opportunity to meet, get acquainted and for me to explain the study to you. We will begin to talk about your experiences once we've answered any questions you might have. I will be asking you to describe your experience of intermarriage, including your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, as well as situations, events, places, and people connected with your experience. I will not be leading you in any direction, rather I will be following your lead.

During the interviews it's important that you describe your *actual experience* rather than your opinions on the topic we are exploring. I want to stress that *there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers*. I want to learn about *your* experiences, *whatever* they may be for you.

Before our interview, I would appreciate it if you would take some time to think about your experiences as they relate to the topic we are exploring. As you think about your experience from time to time, you may want to jot down your thoughts or feelings (but this is not necessary). When we meet again for our second interview I will ask you to describe your experience of being intermarried in further detail.

The first and second interviews will take approximately one hour and a half long each. Another interview may be necessary if we find that we haven't had enough time to adequately explore your experiences. After I have completed the study I will be happy to share my findings with you.

I would like to remind you that your participation in this study is *completely* voluntary and that you can opt out at any time. All information will be kept *strictly* anonymous. If you decide that you no longer want to participate in the study, all information about you will be destroyed.

I value your participation and thank you for the commitment of time, energy, and effort. I look forward to meeting with you on [DATE] at [TIME]. If there is a problem with the date of our meeting, you can reach me at [PHONE NUMBER] I Look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely, Karen Cogan

Appendix D

Consent to Participate

I, _____, voluntarily consent to participate in an interview with Karen Cogan, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta. The purpose of this study has been explained to me and I understand that the information given by me will be used solely for the purpose of understanding the experience of intermarriage.

I agree to participate in the study and am willing to share my experiences with the researcher. I am aware that two or more interviews of approximately one hour in length each will be tape recorded and transcribed. Interviews will take place at a mutually convenient location. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I can opt out of the study at any point without suffering negative consequences. I am also aware that if talking about my experiences raises any concerns for me which I wish to discuss further with a counsellor, Karen Cogan will suggest individuals I might contact.

I am aware that all information associated with this study is strictly anonymous and that my identity, or that of any other persons I mention will not be revealed at any time. When transcribing the interview recordings the researcher will use code names for my name and for those of any individuals that I mention. Furthermore, tape recordings and interview transcripts and these will be stored in a secure place. Interview recordings will be erased when the transcripts have been completed.

I am also aware that the information obtained from the interviews will be used by Karen Cogan solely for the purposes of research and that portions of the interview transcripts will be included in the research paper and in presentations about the research findings.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E

Sample Interview Questions

Personal Background (Sample Questions)

Could you tell me a little bit about yourself and your family background? Where you are from originally? Tell me about your family and upbringing?

Could you tell me about your religious upbringing and your religious affiliation?

Could you tell me about your husband's/wife's family? Your husband's/wife's religious background and current affiliation?

Eliciting story of meeting and getting married (Sample Question)

I'm wondering if you'd tell me the story of how you met your husband/wife and how you came to marry him/her?

Experiences of Intermarriage (Sample Questions)

What has it been like to be married to a person who is Jewish? Could you describe for me aspects of intermarriage that have been significant for you?

I'm also interested in small, every day experiences related to intermarriage that may seem unimportant. Can you tell me about any kinds of reactions or experiences you have had, big or small, over the years that are related to being married to a person who is Jewish?

Interview Process (Sample Questions)

What has it been like sharing your intermarriage experiences?

What has it been like sharing your experiences without your spouse present? How, if at all, do you think the process would have changed had your husband/wife been present throughout the interview process?

What was it like talking about intermarriage with me, knowing that I'm Jewish and intermarried? Was it difficult or uncomfortable at times?

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

APPENDIX F

Sample of Individual Transcript Analysis

Meaning Unit	Paraphrase	Themes
1. My acceptance into Lynda's family was fabulous. She was not so lucky with my family. My family had a lot more difficulty with her integrating into our family, than I did integrating into hers and so I suppose my first close experience was a very positive one. Every one was so very very friendly to me.	During courtship, he felt fortunate to be warmly accepted by his wife's Jewish family. His Catholic family struggled in accepting his wife into the family.	Felt acceptance during courtship by wife's family; Opposition to wife by his family.
2. Her mother. . . was very observant and certainly taught me everything I know about kashrut. . . If I have a question about kashrut or anything I'll phone her, and her brother, who is quite orthodox, so he really knows everything. . . Her mother was very accepting of me, explained the protocol of meals, no cheeseburgers and no milk with your meat and so on. Very nicely, just matter of factly. Just 'this is the way we do it'.	Wife's mother and uncle were observant Jews and explained Jewish traditions (i.e. kashrut) in a respectful, non-threatening manner. Wife's family's formidable acceptance made his courtship with wife pleasant and did not create stressors for couple.	Observant Jewish Mother-in-law accepts him during courtship, family members educate and mentor him about Jewish traditions through marriage.
3. I was really committed. . . This was going to be it. So. . . I didn't care [what my parents thought]. I had made my decision. For whatever reason I knew that a man's connection to his family particularly to his mother can be the ruination of a marriage. And I knew that I had to make a decision. It was either going to be Lynda or my mother. And I made my decision. I married her. And I took her 1000 miles away to a new city and that was my choice. Done. And I think the resolve I had then is what saved a lot of grief. Because I didn't have any qualms. I knew where my allegiances were. I knew I had decided to marry Lynda and quite frankly I was prepared to disown my family. . . I knew that a man particularly can't choose between his wife and his mother.	Commitment to Lynda and belief that his mother could destroy his relationship resulted in his making a choice between the two. Decision to align with Lynda, marry, and move far away was a means of establishing distance from intrusive family influences.	Decision to differentiate from mother and align with wife; physical move is means to achieve safe distance from negative external family forces

APPENDIX G

GLOSSARY

bar-mitzvah/bat-mitzvah- A ceremony which indicates that the Jewish male (bar-mitzvah) and Jewish female (bat-mitzvah) have become full members of the Jewish community and assume all the adult responsibilities of Jewish laws and traditions. Jewish males have their bar-mitzvahs at the age of 13, whereas Jewish girls have their bat-mitzvahs at the age of 12.

bris- Jewish male circumcision, involving the removal of the male's foreskin. According to Jewish law, the bris is to be performed eight days after the child's birth. The traditional ceremony is performed by a person called a **mohel**.

chuppah- a four cornered canopy under which Jewish brides and grooms marry in traditional Jewish wedding ceremonies. The chuppah is often decorated with flowers and represents the commitment of the couple to establish and maintain a Jewish home.

four questions- see **Passover**

gefilte fish- This is a traditional Jewish food which is ground fish shaped into balls, poached, and eaten with horseradish.

goy- The word is derived from the Hebrew word meaning "other nation" and generally refers to non-Jewish people. The term can be used in a pejorative fashion or in a playful way. Like most words, the meaning is dependent upon who is saying the word, how it is said, and the intent of the person saying it.

hamentaschen- see **Purim**

Hanukkah- This is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the rededication of the Temple in 165 B.C. for Jewish worship after the victory of the Maccabees. Like all Jewish holidays, it is celebrated according to the Jewish calendar, which follows both the solar and lunar cycles. The calendar begins at what is believed to be the beginning of the world's creation. This usually corresponds to the North American calendar (which follows only the solar cycle) between late November and late December. Although Christmas and Channukah dates often overlap, there is no connection between the two holidays. During the eight days of Hanukkah, candles are lit every evening in a special candle holder called a 'menorah' and Jews eat fried potato pancakes called **latkes**.

Kaddish- This is a Jewish prayer that is recited for the dead by the rabbi and the immediate family of the deceased.

kashrut/kosher- These words refer to the complex Jewish traditional dietary laws (i.e. traditional Jews do not eat meat products with milk products, keep separate dishes and cutlery for dairy and meat products, do not eat pork products or shellfish etc.). Most Jews today do not follow all the rules of kashrut, but many follow some of the rules.

klezmer- This word refers to music developed by Eastern European Jews who immigrated to America. The music has many influences and includes Jewish melodies, folk songs, dances and incorporates elements of North American Jazz. Klezmer instruments usually include the accordion and the clarinet to create a distinctive and celebratory sound. Klezmer is sometimes referred to as "Jewish Jazz".

kosher- see **kashrut**

latkes- see **Hanukkah**

mohel- see **bris**

Mormon mission- Mormon men and some women, usually in their early twenties, are strongly encouraged to do missionary work abroad for approximately two years.

Mormon Temple- Marriages between two Mormons in a Holy Mormon Temple are the ideal, guaranteeing the couple eternal happiness and that their offspring will be with them after the resurrection. There are few Mormon Temples in the world. Those Mormons who marry exogamously, or those who are unable to travel to a Mormon Temple, can marry in Mormon Churches as the next best alternative.

Passover (English)/ **Pesach** (Hebrew)- This is an important Jewish holiday that celebrates the exodus of Jewish slaves from Egypt and the freedom that G-d granted them under the leadership of Moses. The story of exodus is recited in a lengthy and elaborate Passover dinner ceremony called a **seder**. In Israel, the Passover seder is conducted on one night, whereas in North America it is repeated on two nights. Leavened food products are restricted during the eight days of Passover. Jews eat flatbread called "matzoh" to remind them that they fled Egypt so quickly, that they were unable to wait for their bread to rise before leaving. During the Passover seder, traditionally the youngest child present asks a series of **four questions** to the elders at the table, asking them as to why they are eating different foods and practicing different customs. The elders then respond by explaining to the children the story of exodus and God's commandment to remember the miraculous event.

pogrom- This term is derived from the Russian word "riot" or "devastation". It refers generally to the organized massacres of Jewish communities in Russia and Poland between the late 19th and early 20th century.

Purim- This is a one day Jewish holiday celebrating the story of the Book of Esther. Esther was a Jewess who married the king of Persia and thereby saved her Jewish people from impending genocide. Jewish people eat **hamentaschen**, triangle shaped cookies filled with dried fruit filling, to celebrate the holiday. The shape of hamentaschen represents the hat worn by Haman, the king's chief minister, who unsuccessfully plotted to have the Persian Jews killed.

Rosh Hashanah- These are High Holy days for Jewish people, marking the beginning of the Jewish calendar and the creation of human beings. Many Jewish people attend synagogue for two days on Rosh Hashanah. Rosh Hashanah marks a ten day period of self-examination which leads to **Yom Kippur**, the day of atonement on which many Jews go to synagogue and fast.

Sabbath (English)/**Shabbat** (Hebrew)/**Shabbes** (Yiddish)- For Jews, Sabbath is a holy day of rest, beginning at sundown on Friday evening, and ending at sundown on Saturday evening. A traditional **Shabbat dinner** marks the beginning of the Sabbath. Blessings over wine and special braided egg bread called "challah" are recited before an elaborate meal is eaten. Sabbath is a joyful time for Jewish families to gather together.

seder- see **Passover**

Sephardic/Ashkenazi- Sephardic Jews are those who descended originally from Spain and Portugal. They were expelled from Spain late in the 15th century, and traveled to many countries including Turkey, Syria, Palestine, North Africa, and India. Sephardic Jews have many traditions, rituals, and customs that differ from Ashkenazi Jews, who descended from central and eastern Europe. The majority of North American Jews are Ashkenazi. The languages and pronunciations of Jewish words are different for both groups. The Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew is used in Israel today.

shiksa- a Yiddish word that refers to a Gentile woman in a derogatory fashion.

shiva- This Hebrew word means 'seven'. In Jewish tradition, families mourn for seven days following the death of a family member. This process is called "**sitting shiva**". In earlier times,

when Jewish children intermarried, some traditional parents would disown their children and "sit shiva" for them, as if they had died.

shul- a Yiddish word for synagogue.

tallis/tallit- a prayer shawl worn by Jewish Orthodox men and by both Jewish Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist men and women.

yarimulke/kippah- The former is a Yiddish word and the latter is a Hebrew word that refer to the prayer caps that Jewish men and some women wear in synagogue, during prayer, and during many Jewish ceremonies as a show of respect to God. Orthodox Jewish men wear their prayer caps all the time.

Yiddish- A language developed by European Jews in the Middle ages based on German, Hebrew, and other European languages. Many Yiddish words are very expressive and are difficult to translate into English.

Yom Kippur-see Rosh Hashanah